

THE LAST ISSUE OF THE STONY BROOK PRESS PRESS

(END OF THE WORLD EDITION)

LITERARY SUPPLEMENT INSIDE! NEATO!



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FAREWELL

Are ya'll ready to collectively combust into flames and transport to the Great Unknown at the exact moment of sunrise on December 21st? Well you should be. I know things were just getting good here on Earth – I haven't had a chance to get totally used to the new iPhone yet, and it seems awfully cruel of the universe to start legalizing weed just before I get wiped from existence – but we have to prepare for what's coming. Now that Hurricane Sandy symbolically confirmed what the Internet has been telling us since the mid-90's, there's no time to hesitate.

Luckily we at the Press have had our ducks in a row for quite some time now. Our portal bunker to the next dimension has been ready for years now (no, you can't come use it, sorry) and we have plenty of tin foil to go around for at least the editorial board. But one thing we could not decide on was how to sign off

to our readers. We know that you've come to us for the latest in hard-hitting news, thoughtful editorials, and knowledgeable reviews of new happenings in pop culture. We also told you the best places to take a shit on campus.

But all of that is gone. Will we return? Will we still be there in the new dimension, perhaps one parallel to the one we currently occupy? Maybe in this new universe our eyeballs will be on our kneecaps and we all communicate through interpretive dance. But we make this promise: no matter what form we take, we will continue being the undisputed publication of record, transcending space and time to bring you the latest information about pressing Stony Brook news, hard-hitting features, and more articles about taking dumps than ever before.

There's a sad sort of clanging from the clock in the hall
 And the bells in the steeple too
 And up in the nursery an absurd little bird
 Is popping out to say "cuckoo"
 Cuckoo, cuckoo

Regretfully they tell us Cuckoo, cuckoo
 But firmly they compel us Cuckoo, cuckoo
 To say goodbye . . .
 Cuckoo!
 . . . to you

So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, good night
 I hate to go and leave this pretty sight

So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, adieu
 Adieu, adieu, to yieu and yieu and yieu

So long, farewell, au revoir, auf wiedersehen
 I'd like to stay and taste my first champagne

So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, goodbye
 I leave and heave a sigh and say goodbye -- Goodbye!
 I'm glad to go, I cannot tell a lie
 I flit, I float, I fleetly flee, I fly
 The sun has gone to bed and so must I

So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, goodbye
 Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye

Goodbye!

STONY BROOK SEEKS REACCREDITATION

by Brianna Peterson

Stony Brook University is in the process of a decennial review by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, a group that reviews institutions of higher learning for the federal government to make sure both research and loan funds are being spent well.

Every 10 years, institutions that are part of the Middle States undergo examination “in order to promote educational excellence and ensure compliance with its outlined standards of quality,” according to a letter written by President Samuel L. Stanley to the members of the Stony Brook community.

Stony Brook was first accredited by the Middle States in 1957. The process that the university undergoes involves self-review to make sure that it follows the 14 standards for accreditation. A

planning committee consisting of six groups of faculty, grad students and undergraduates will review the “Self-Study Design Plan” which, according to Dennis Assanis, the provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, defines as “a comprehensive self-study which will investigate topics such as the assessment of institutional effectiveness and student learning, the interdisciplinarity of knowledge, the integration of our educational offerings and research activities, the inclusion of diversity and internationalization in our curricula, as well as many other issues of key importance in the development of plans that will shape the future of Stony Brook.”

The review will help prepare the university for a visit by an evaluation team in Spring 2014, and will take two

years to complete. This is Stony Brook’s first comprehensive review in 20 years. It is comprehensive in that it will include all facets of the university such as student life, education, the hospital as well as other outlets. The review is also optional, but is being undergone by President Stanley because he is relatively new to the university.

If Stony Brook fails to pass the review, then research and loan funds will not be lost. If Stony Brook passes, however, it can gain re-accreditation with or without provisions.

Students who are interested in following the process are urged by President Stanley and Assanis to follow the Stony Brook website for updates and to submit questions regarding the process to middlestates@stonybrook.edu.



Rest easy, Stony Brook students: our school has all the upvotes it could ever need. Yup, Stony Brook might not be in the headlines, but on Nov. 27, it hit the front page of Reddit, placing SBU in the company of knowledgeable mallards, adorable kittens and whatever social justice issue we’re getting irked about today. Except it wasn’t a story posted by Stony Brook that made it to the main page; in fact it wasn’t a post at all. Instead, a comment

/R/PUTRID_SBU

by Evan Goldaper

made by Redditor Shakakka99 mentioned Stony Brook, and the original post made it to the front page. Not quite the same, but Stony Brook, like every other low-self-esteem Internet user, will take whatever it can get.

So what was the question? Was it “What is the most awesome state university you’ve ever attended?” Was it “What schools have mascots that are lovable and energetic?” Nope and nope. Congrats Stony Brook, you’re getting that glorious karma from HighJackin’s question “What is the absolute worst smell you have ever smelled?”

And the answer? One time, in 1987, when Shakakka99 was a bright-eyed and “eager to please” teen, he attempted to clean the grease trap in Kelly Dining, unleashing a “horrendous fucking grey and black sludge” that spread across the dining hall and made over four employees vomit instantaneously. Shakakka99 describes the smell as being “a living, breathing thing—a rancid mixture of purified egg, bacon grease, rotting flesh, and whatever the hell else was in there.” Apparently no one had cleaned the grease trap “in fucking years.” It’s a great story for you to be reading right now, when you’re probably in line at Wendy’s or eating that omelet at the SAC, right?

So congratulations, Stony Brook. You might not be making the headlines, but you’ve got so much Reddit cred it’s not even funny. Either that, or what’s not funny is that in 1987, your dining hall was capable of summoning a hellish nightmare beast constructed purely of fetid odor. I’m sure your college friends are thrilled.

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

by Rebecca Tapio

Hope and laughter were the theme of the night at All the World's A Stage, a variety talent show raising money and awareness for pediatric cancer and benefitting the Sunrise Fund on Monday, Dec. 3.

Selling out at 200 tickets, the first event ever organized by the Stony Brook Student Health Initiative to Network and Educate (SB-SHINE) featured almost two dozen acts and raised more than \$1,000 before outside donations, all of which will go directly to the programs put on by the Sunshine Fund.

Rosemary Mahan, a pediatric oncology/hematology nurse practitioner at Stony Brook Long Island Children's Hospital and representative of the fund, facilitates and monitors the treatment of child patients throughout all aspects of their care.

Many programs offered to families are supported and financed by the Sunrise Fund, which seeks to "turn fear into hope."

"One of the most important things to let families know is that it's not just the child who we're caring for, and it's not just the disease that we're trying to treat," Mahan said. "We're trying to manage the child's illness and work together with the children and the families to help them get through this very difficult time."

For the parents of children with cancer, one of the most important things they can do for their child during their treatment is, as father Lance Macioce said, "Trying to keep their life as normal as possible. There's a lot of events that they can't do at certain times, especially when her numbers drop down, so we

always find alternatives to keep them occupied."

His daughter, Taylor, 6, was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) in April 2011. With ALL, malignant, immature white blood cells are overproduced and



crowd out normal blood cells in bone marrow, spreading to other organs. According to the National Cancer Institute, ALL is the most common form of cancer among children.

Now in remission following treatment, Taylor and her sister Sydney, 8, performed as a singing and dancing duo in All the World's A Stage, winning over the hearts of the entire crowd.

"I feel like the crowd was very responsive," said Ramon Reinoso, a junior cinema and cultural studies and health sciences major who was co-hosting the show. "They were very interactive with us, jumping on stage and getting involved in the raffle, clapping when they were supposed to. They gave the kids a great, great reception."

Prizes were handed out by children representing the Sunrise Fund, awarding first place to Stony Brook Live, a cooperative group that performs ska, rock, jazz and pop songs at campus events.

Activities like All the World's A Stage serves an important purpose to children and families fighting cancer, along with the holiday parties, talent shows, art galleries and fashion shows put on by the Sunrise Fund.

"We look at opportunities to celebrate life," said Mahan.



IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD AS THEY KNOW IT

by Olivia Burne

Dec. 21, 2012 is the end. Or maybe just the beginning of a new Earth era. According to thousands of Redditors, conspiracy theorists and one particularly enthusiastic entrepreneur from California, the date marks the end of the Mayan calendar and also the end of the world, or the beginning of the end.

The Mesoamerican Long Count calendar is thought to be a non-repetitive, 5125-year cycle used by the ancient civilization of Maya. And on Dec. 21, 2012, these 5125 years will come to an end, marking what some have described as the end of the world as we know it.

What this claim means is still unclear. After all, the Mayans did not predict a nuclear war or terrorist attack that some groups are proffering.

The Mayans did not suppose that the calendar would just stop on Dec. 21, 2012, according to Susan Milbrath from the University of Florida's Museum of Natural History.

"We have no record or knowledge that they would think the world would come to an end at that point," said Milbrath in an interview with G. Jeffrey MacDonald of *USA Today*.

But this has not stopped some organizations from devoting time, energy, and millions of dollars into an end-of-world contingency plan. One such organization is Vivos, headed by Californian entrepreneur and apparent godsend, Robert Vicino.

The millionaire felt that he was called to build a shelter for 1,000 people in 1980 that would protect its inhabitants from an earth-shattering event. According to the Vivos website, Vicino was "not very religious at the time, did not know who the Mayans were and had no other motivation or cause to be alarmed—just a very strong inspiration, that he now believes was from God."

This inspiration received the backing of a group of businessmen in 2008 that saw the time was right to start construction on more shelters. There are now three communal living shelters, in Indiana, Nebraska and the Rockies, as well

as family suite-style options, for those who don't want to share the end of the world with 1,000 others.

This may seem altruistic and kind—there is hope for us after all—that is until one sees the price. Co-ownership of the shelters begins at a cool \$35,000 and reach \$50,000 for the now sold-out Indiana shelter.

The Vivos website describes the units as "deep underground, airtight, fully self-contained complexes designed to survive virtually any catastrophe, or threat scenario including natural or manmade disaster."

Vivos staff said via email that "December 21, 2012 is not the end, but the beginning of the end. The next few years will be very dangerous."

And what do the Vivos staff believe will happen? A number of severe solar flare "kill shots" that will cause death and destruction between March and June 2013. At least we have until after Christmas, right?

But it is not just rich folk with money to burn who are preparing for doomsday. Patrick Danton, 21, an environmental humanities major at Stony Brook, is looking forward to Dec. 21, seeing it as an opportunity to witness a "social consciousness" shift.

"The problem with it is the misinformation," said Danton. "It could be something horrible like a huge cataclysm or it could be something really good."

The idea is that an electromagnetic pulse, coupled with a weakening magnetosphere, could wipe out the earth's electronics, according to Danton. This could mean a literal shift back in electro-time and a conscience awakening for the earth. Perhaps we will start appreciating our planet a little more.

Even with all of these theories, there still rests the assurance from National

Aeronautics and Space Administration, who said they foresee nothing monumental occurring in the days before Christmas. In a particularly scathing question-and-answer webpage titled "Why the World Won't End," NASA staff explain that the story began with a claim that Nibiru, a supposed planet discovered by the Sumerians, was heading towards the earth and would make impact in May 2003. That didn't happen and the apocalypse-faithful shifted the date to Dec. 2012, to coincide with the end of the Mayan calendar, according to the NASA website.

After all, the Mayans did not predict a nuclear war or terrorist attack that some groups are proffering.

NASA continued to debunk each of the theories of a supernatural end of the world and ended the question and answer with this comment: "For any claims of disaster or dramatic changes in 2012, where is the science? Where is the evidence? There is none, and for all the fictional assertions, whether they are made in books, movies, documentaries or over the Internet, we cannot change that simple fact."

Nicely done, NASA.

However, through all the haze and smoke (from the meteor careering towards the earth as we speak, of course), it is clear that people are convinced that the end of the world as we know it is nigh. Perhaps this desire to make the most of the last few weeks on earth is not as crazy as one might think. A sweet, fully self-contained, airtight pad deep underground would be a great location for a New Year's party. That is, if we make it to 2013.

A SIT-DOWN WITH SANTA

by John Fischer

“Am I on the nice list or the naughty list?” I asked.

Dressed in red garments with a snowy white beard wrapped tightly around the lower part of his face and a pair of glasses sitting snugly on the rim of his nose, Santa Claus threw back his head and let out a hearty laugh.

He then proceeded to tell me that the only way he could feel the “vibes” as to whether I was naughty or nice was if I sat on his lap.

And that’s exactly how I ended up here in this picture.

“Oh, he’s a fine one,” said he said as his whiskers tickled my cheeks, and I sat there, smiling awkwardly and waiting for the camera to take the photo.

When asked why Mrs. Claus was not with him, Claus said she was busy at the North Pole (where he lives) with the elves and reindeer, making preparations for the big day. However, Claus made a note to squash a misconception that many people believe: he does not spend 364 days of the year at the North Pole, only to leave it once a year on Christmas Eve. Or at least he has not for the last 33 years.

Starting the day after Halloween, the 586-year old Claus leaves his workshop and hits the mall where he sits on a chair in the center of the building, seating children on his lap and asking them what they want for Christmas. He has worked in many malls and convenience stores, starting with JC Penny in 1979 and has worked at the Smith Haven Mall for the last 11 years.

“I have a fan base here,” he said. “It scares me someday not to be back. The delight of children and parents are what bring me back.”

Claus first came to the mall in 2002, hoping to make a difference and bring happiness to children whose families were impacted by the events of Sept. 11. Through his time here, he has met children with disabilities, who have lost loved ones and who have had parents walk out on their families.

He said that the most stressful part of his job is when a child asks him to bring

back a dead loved one, but that his job gives him the chance to help them in any way he can, whether it means hearing their Christmas list or coming to their house with a bag full of presents. He has even stopped at homes for Thanksgiving dinner.

“The best gift was making someone happy if they lost their mom and daddy,” said Claus. “And I’ve been asked that many times.”

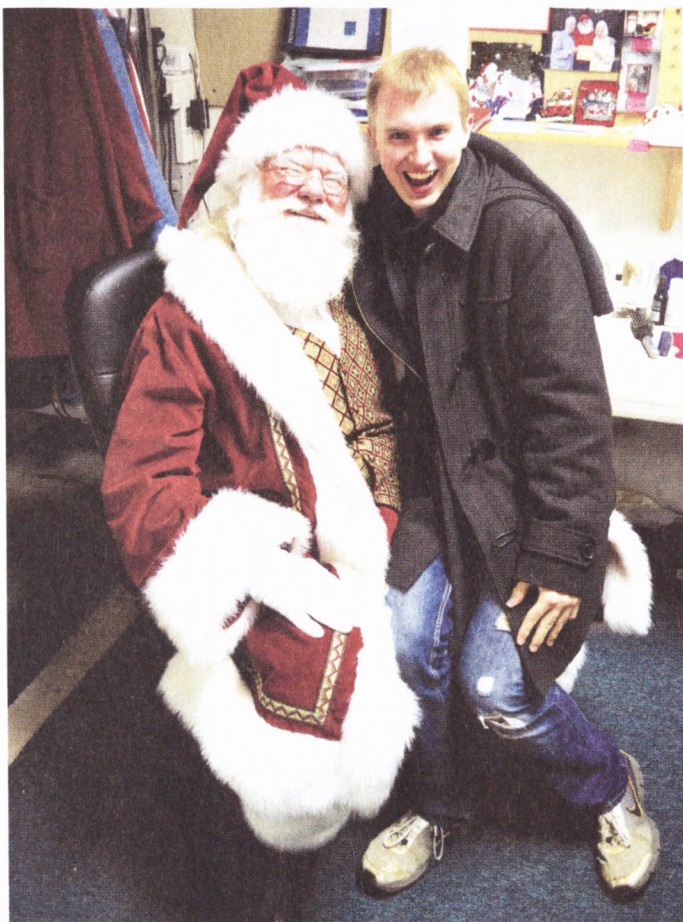
Claus said he loves seeing the joy he can give to a child or parent by helping in any way he can, especially when he can see it on their faces. He says that it makes his job as Santa Claus a worthwhile gift.

“The rewarding assets are the smiles on children’s faces,” he said, “the facial expressions they give you. “Not just the children, but the parents as well. You know when you’ve done something good, what other good you can leave.”

While some requests are emotional and difficult, others are strange, but funny. Claus loves these requests though, and tries to be as specific as possible with all his gifts. “One time, I had a child ask me for a giraffe, a real giraffe,” he said. “And I asked what color it was.”

When not working at the mall, Claus is busy at his workshop, monitoring the progress of his elves and getting his reindeer in shape for takeoff on Christmas Eve when they fly at the speed of light around the world, so he can deliver presents to good boys and girls.

Claus’s advice to all children who want to stay off the naughty list: listen. Do what



they are told and do not disobey their parents.

“I stress the listening part,” he said.

“Of course, now, we use the Elf on Shelf,” he added in reference to a toy that parents use to remind children to be respectful, or Claus will not come.

Another useful piece of information to know: Claus is a choco-man and said chocolate chip cookies are his favorite snack, with a cold glass of whole milk to wash them down. “Santa likes the fattening stuff.”

Claus said his job working as a mall Santa is important not only because it offers him the opportunity to make a child happy, but because it also gives him the chance to stress the importance of being a mall Santa Claus.

“It’s important to get the word out that Santa Clauses (wink, wink) serve the public,” he said. “Any which way. We have a heart.”

WHO CARES ABOUT USG?

by Jodie Mann

In a school with over 15,900 undergraduate students, the Undergraduate Student Government senate meetings are shockingly empty. The weekly meetings are where the senate discusses and votes on everything from club budget applications to print quotas. One would think that how USG spends the Student Activity Fee would be of serious concern to all enrolled students, but no one ever comes.

"I do not feel it's a useful way to spend my time," said David Harary, a sophomore music major. "If something is important it will be written up by the university or a newspaper or become a topic of conversation."

All USG officials are required to hold office hours every week where students can come in and discuss their concerns with senators or members of the executive council. No one ever goes.

"It's really a bummer because I think I can be a really good resource for students who want their concerns to be addressed with the rest of USG," said Sophia Marsh, vice president of communications, of the lack of students coming to address problems.

Though Harary did vote in the elections last spring, he was in the minority. Only about 1,750 students voted, making up less than 10 percent of the student body, and even fewer voted in the runoff elections that followed.

"People at this school have all different types of work ethic," said Harary. "I think that generally it is a low priority for a lot of people either because they are too busy managing school work."

Though USG-sponsored events, such as the annual Brookfest Concert, do generate attendance, students are generally unaware of and unconcerned with what their student government is up to. This year's USG even put out a survey to find out what students wanted out of campus events, but only received 500 responses.

"Most people don't even know what they do," said Zane Hopkins, a senior business major. "They just think [USG] as a once a year petition you sign for people you know."

Hopkins did not vote in the elections last spring, but has attended several USG-funded concerts such as the Hood Internet show last week and the end-of-year Wiz Khalifa concert in May 2012.

Marsh feels that students are mostly just uninformed about how much USG actually does for the student body.

"I think that most students don't realize that USG plays a role in almost every aspect of the campus community," Marsh said. "I think once students start to better understand the organization and how it operates we will see a huge spike in involvement."

Aaron Doucett, a sophomore atmospheric and oceanic sciences major, agrees that students are uninformed about USG and its purpose.

"[Students] either have absolutely no idea what USG does, or, have a limited understanding of its involvement with clubs and organizations, acting as the 'piggy bank' for both clubs and events on campus which they promote and fund," Doucett said.

So far this year, Marsh and her fellow executive council members, most of whom ran as members of the Seawolves for Change Party on a platform of improved communication, have been working on having more student input.

"We've begun holding Town Hall meetings where students can come learn about various USG topics and directly express their opinions to officials," Marsh said. "In addition to the meetings, we have also begun circulating a Student Life survey in order to help guide the SAB in their programming decisions."

Doucett also sees the general discontent a lot of clubs feel with the way USG operates to be another issue with the organizations relationship to the student body.

"USG is rather keen on promoting their own events, which draw a large portion of their overall budget, but don't seem to take a strong enough interest in the clubs and organizations they fund," he said.

Stony Brook is definitely not unique when it comes to the apathetic attitude towards student government.

"Nobody I know goes to meetings," said Kathryn Fogarty, a junior at Villanova University in Pennsylvania. "During elections I would say we're actively involved, but not otherwise."

When asked about why they're not concerned with student government, the group of students all had different reasons.

"I mean, they don't do anything, do they?" said Christina Yakomin, a VU sophomore.

Dan Reid, a junior, agreed. "[Their actions] have no actual recourse," he said.

Fogarty however, says her lack of interest stems from trust in her peers.

"The people involved obviously really care about the university, and so we trust them to make the appropriate decisions," she said.

At the College of Wooster in Ohio, students don't pay much attention to student government.

"People only vote when people are tabling and kind of yell at you when you leave meals," said Katie Libby, a junior at Wooster. She said students are uninvolved because "they don't do anything."

While the lack of concern for student government is an extreme example, citizen participation in government in general is low, including on a national scale.

Albert Cover, a political science professor at Stony Brook University shared his insight on the matter.

"In general, the level of participation is fallen off over time," he said.

However, Cover went on to explain that this trend could be viewed from two opposing viewpoints.

"The partisan gridlock has hardly helped inspire confidence that government can solve problems," Cover said of the negative views, before going on to clarify the other side. "There are optimists who claim that apathy is a good sign, suggesting contentment overall with the system; if people were deeply involved, it would suggest a nagging dissatisfaction with government."

Stony Brook students, however, such as Harary, believe the disinterest stems more from the feeling that their input does not really carry any weight.

"There is such a poor representation of student opinion in the elected officials because so few people vote," Harary said. "The many regulations USG has that can make it frustrating for clubs to run properly [cause] people to lose faith and interest in the student government that is supposed to represent and help the student body it governs."

Hopkins believes part of USG's problem stems from poor communication with students. He feels the best way for USG to promote student input would be to advertise better.

"Hand out fliers, talk to people," said Hopkins. "Just get the message out. Too few people know what's really going on at USG."

And that is almost exactly what Marsh has planned.

"Next semester we plan on releasing a periodic USG newsletter to be distributed around campus to keep students informed on new legislation, events, and other USG matters," she said. "Even though there is still a large disconnect between USG and the student body, myself and other USG officials have been working really hard to bridge that gap."

SECRET SANTA GIFT IDEAS



To Brianna by Jesse Chang

O Blessed Brianna, I bestow upon thee the holiest of gifts: A vial of my blood infused with strands of facial hair extracted from Sir Sean Connery, my tears and North Korean unicorn powder. Treat it with caution, as this powerful elixir shall grant infinite awesome unto its user.



Dear Mark Greek, I saw this fuzzy, pink pen and thought of you. Not only is it topped with delicate feathers, but its body is adorned with sequins. Because you are a sports fan, as well as The Press' ever-so-diligent and omnipresent production manager, I figured you should have it. You can also pet it and do other things with it, I'm sure. Peace and love, -- Your Secret Santa, Bitty Baby (Arielle Rose Dollinger)



Secret Santa: Steven/Secret Santee: Olivia

My Secret Santee is Olivia: track star, photo editor, and...from New Zealand?

Do people from New Zealand even celebrate Christmas?

They probably celebrate something like National Kangaroo Appreciation Day over there.

And thus the perfect gift: a book about Christmas to help my dear friend assimilate into American culture.

But not just any book. I found what critics hail as the definitive guide to all things Christmas: a thick little volume they call The Bible.



Sam-Since I know you love music, and I am such a good friend I have done the impossible.

I have obtained an advance copy of Kidz Bop 23, set to come in January of 2013.

Since we all know the world is going to end, I knew you'd want the 10-year-old renditions of your favorite tunes, like Tay's "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together" and "Gangnam Style" to be the soundtrack for your last few days on Earth. You're welcome. --Jodie

For Evan Goldaper <3

In light of the December 21 end of the world, I have bought Evan a \$35,000 berth within the Nebraska Vivos underground shelter. This will give Evan, and 950 lucky others, the basic necessities he needs for an entire year. I would have chosen the \$50,000 a head Indiana base, but it is sold out.~Olivia



To Priscila/From Evan

I was thrilled to learn that Priscila was planning on traveling to South America next semester.

People who travel need all sorts of things to make their trip easier, so I got her this unabridged Korean-to-English dictionary.

Wikipedia tells me that there is a small amount of Koreans in South America, so it must be an essential language to master.

I hope she will take this book with her wherever she goes: it only weighs a dozen pounds or so.



To John /From Nicole K

The best gift for John would be a fishing pole. Fishing is fun and cool. After the semester he must of had, being a journalism major and all, John needs to have some fun during winter break. Since it's winter, it would be a great gift to use to go ice fishing.

And hey, I mean, who wouldn't want a gift that goes so well with their last name?



For Vincent: Mane 'n Tail for men: to tame your nappy head.

Yours most sincerely,
Sam Liebrand



Dear Chris Priore, Merry Christmas! I know how much junk food means to you, and I am giving you this basket of candies, chips and cookies. Don't think about the fact that all these sweet, gooey and fattening contents will enter your body, raise your cholesterol levels and clog your digestive system. Just relax and pop these sweets in to your mouth, ignoring the fact that they will slowly erode and create holes in your teeth that will eventually evolve in to cavities. All the best for your sweet holiday fun! Your Secret Santa, John R. Fischer



Dearest Beatrice,

I know you're packin' a lot of data. We all are these days. So I gifted you this really sick USB drive in the shape of a pitbull wearing sunglasses. When you plug it in, it lights up and says, "I don't megabyte!"

Every time you hear it, I hope you think of me. With all my love, Vin Barone



2: Tom/From: Andy

I didn't know what you wanted for Christmas so I thought I'd give you the most personal gift I could.

I cut out my heart and wrote my name on it for you in Sharpie. It's kinda small and shaped weird and has some stuff on it, but it's mine alright, and I guess now it's yours. It hurt a lot, but I don't have anyone to give it to anyway. God, I'm so lonely.



You are welcome Rebecca Tapio. I know this child-sized ruffle-y dress is perfect for you: not only for your short frame, but also for your very girly personality. It will go nicely with the knife you frequently play with.

I saw this and thought about how perfect it would be for a five-year-old girl...or you. I mean, you love J-Crew, right? ~Priscila Korb



Secret Santa for Nicole Kohn, from Alyssa Melillo

Everyone who isn't a vegetarian loves bacon—it's crispy, savory and oh-so-fattening. So that's why I'm getting Nicole a bacon wallet.

No, it's not actually made of bacon, but it looks pretty damn good. Even though Lady Gaga made her meat-print fashion statement last year, Nicole will have the trendiest wallet of the season. Meat never goes out of style.



For Christmas this year, I would give Jodie a pair of lovely, trampled-on one dollar flip-flops from good ol' one dollar flip-flop day at Old Navy. Don't worry, Jodie: they didn't cost me too much, especially with my 25 percent employee discount. Being a good friend, I paid special attention to your feet and remembered just how much you love them.~Beatrice



From: Mark Greek
To: Andy Polhamus

After about three minutes of careful consideration, I ultimately came up with the perfect gift for my good friend, Andy Polhamus. If there's one thing he loves more than political correctness, it's laugh-track comedies of the late-90's and early-00's. Therefore, the only logical gift for my man would be Season 1 of F•R•I•E•N•D•S on DVD. Universally accepted as the seminal situational comedy of this or any generation. I can think of no better gift than Joey Tribbiani, in all his glory.



Hey Alyssa, so I hear you're a big One Direction fan. Well lucky for you, I don't really like them too much. That doesn't mean I can't pick out the ideal present, a One Direction fanfiction featuring your name in it. Not only will you get that for Christmas, but it will come in the hands of a cardboard standee cutout of a boy who looks like he is from One Direction, but is actually some kid that goes to the high school by my house. I asked him to pose as if he were in One Direction. Enjoy, Brianna



From: Andrew Carrieri/To: Arielle

Arielle, I purchased you non-transferrable 2013 season tickets for the Colorado Springs Sky Sox, a minor league affiliate of Major League Baseball's Colorado Rockies. These tickets, which cost \$475, guarantee you the same seat for all 72 of the team's home games. Concessions, parking and airfare aren't included though. No need to thank me!



For Christmas this year, I gift Nick a sterling set of ninja throwing stars. Perhaps they'll help you during the end of the world in some way, maybe they'll just serve as entertainment in the bunker with Evan. All I know is they're sure to inflict numerous wounds on your suitemates until the end of finals when we will all say our final goodbyes. With all the love left until the world ends, Your absent minded, and forever pain-in-the-ass, Business Manager, Jasmine



For Aleks I would get a baguette Because Aleks seems to be very cultured, and baguettes are French. I've always been told that cultured people like things that are french. Therefore I bestow onto Aleks a loaf of French bread, better known as the baguette. May its sustenance nurture you through all of your travels.-Nick



Dear Mark M.,

I know you like basketball; we've played against each other once or twice. Like any real basketball fan, I assume you don't like the coward LeBron James. So I think you'd really appreciate a homemade effigy of LeBron. The little LeBron is a stick-figure made of twigs, glued together with bubblegum. His jersey is made out of paper. I even cut a piece off one of my shirts to make a headband. All ingredients are especially flammable. Sincerely, Aleks Gilbert



For Steven from Tom

Gift-giving is always hard, but it gets significantly easier when you stop giving a shit about the gift in question. That's why I'm getting you a Fieri Hat, because nothing screams "cool" like a visor with a full head of douchey, frosted tips attached to your dome. Now you can be well prepared to go on your own culinary adventures, and make dishes that according to the New York Times taste "like some combination of radiator fluid and formaldehyde," just like Guy!



To: Dan/From: Mark M.

When you're the new Mark, you never know what Christmas gift to buy. So I went with the safe bet: fruit cake. It's not that good, but it's easy, tastes ok, and when you get annoyed that you got fruit cake just pass it off to the next sucker! Merry Christmas!



Gift for Andrew

You know I gotta get my boy Andrew a trip to a theme park as a gift. So Merry Christmas because I got you an all-day pass to Fantasy Land in Alexandria, Egypt. You're gonna be on your roller coaster flow with their awesome ride called the "Mini Costor."~Dan Cashmar



To the lovely Jasmine, I give a gold-plated set of nail clippers. May you always impress people while doing your personal grooming in public places. Or at least maybe they'll be impressed because it's really gold-colored paint that I put on it because I'm cheap as fuck. With adoration, Rebecca



For Jesse-

I totally would get him crayons and a coloring book because he is super artistic and then he could design some sick layouts and covers. -Chris

THE REVOLUTION

by Beatrice Vantapool



Brand new to the Stony Brook area, The Revolution gaming store is anything but your ordinary, corporate warehouse filled with commercial zombies and customer-service peddling robots.

This is the mentality that fueled The Revolution, as well as founder Michael Auricchio, who is against the direction corporate America has taken to video gaming. An avid gamer since childhood, Auricchio's first Super Nintendo system was the beginning of his relationship with gaming and the Nintendo brand. This relationship was one of the main factors in his decision to open his own retail store.

"I was in first grade and I got a Super NES and that was pretty much it," said Auricchio. "I had an older brother so it was funny because I'm pretty good at games, I guess, so they always got upset with me."

Another factor in what Auricchio calls his "crazy decision" to open a store was his father, who had worked in retail for most of his life. Auricchio and his friends would work in his father's pharmacies, even while owning his own stores. This eventually led to leading to managerial positions that Auricchio never really enjoyed.

The money gained from those positions, though, was what gave him the capital to open The Revolution and make it the unique gaming experience it is today.

Set up across the store are multiple gaming stations, complete with large-screen televisions and any game system a customer would want to set up and play. Complemented with a plastic, green backdrop, on which iconic characters from the Super Mario series race, these stations are also the setting for their weekly Saturday tournaments, which Auricchio

calls his favorite day of the week.

"I have a winner wall for all my winners who win my tournaments, every time they win they get their picture up on the wall, they get a prize from the store, whether it be a t-shirt, a hat, a keychain, and they get bragging rights," said Auricchio. "They get to defend their title for free, so next time we run that specific tournament that they won, they can come and play for free and defend their title, the branded champ."

But the store is not the only thing that is decked out in gaming gear. Even the bathrooms have the gaming charisma that seems so typical of The Revolution. Classic images of game characters line the walls, with a few ships from the Star Wars series hanging from the ceiling.

"The best thing to have in something like this, which I have to note on my little community board, is the friends and family that helped me, that got me here because I definitely could not do this alone," said Auricchio. "I have a great network of friends and family that really stepped up and helped me out with everything, from picking up things to getting good prices on things, to just elbow grease."

With competition from bigger companies like GameStop and Best Buy, there was a concern of how big of a profit they would turn, but The Revolution has something other than a friendly, knowledgeable staff to set them apart.

Keeping with his anti-corporate views, starting a franchise is not in the interest or plans of Auricchio for the future of The Revolution.

"This is for Three Village," said Auricchio. "If expansion is my long term goal, then my short term goal is getting

into the green and getting into the point where it's profitable and it's working. I would rather not open multiple stores; it's what we're fighting here at Revolution, and we're fighting the franchises and fighting the corporations."

In terms of pre-ordered games and new releases, The Revolution has a unique plan for giving their customers what they want in that aspect as well. Aside from tournaments, the game stations are also used for release nights, where customers can play the games that came prior to the new release in the series, or if it's a new series, play other games in anticipation.

"We make releases a little more fun. You're not waiting in line in the cold, you're inside playing the last release of it or playing games if it's a brand new game that no one's ever heard of and we all want," said Auricchio.

The new shop can even be called a small community, especially on new release and tournament nights. Three Village residents, young and old, come out for those gatherings, like the *Call of Duty: Black Ops 2* release. Auricchio had the room playing the first *Black Ops* while they waited, and at midnight, customers ripped open their games right in the store and played with fellow customers and employees alike.

Customer service, "real" customer service, is something that Auricchio holds in high regards. It is a trait he said he inherited from his father. With the warm welcome of old-school arcade machines at the front of the store, and an even warmer welcome from its employees, corporate America may have met their match with Stony Brook's own Revolution.

THE EARTH: A REVIEW

by Evan Goldaper

Recently, I was given the chance to live on *The Earth*, a planet directed by the Illuminati, starring Ghengis Khan, Mother Theresa, a thrill-seeking *Eurypterus remipes*, Henrik Ibsen and your neighbor's cousin and featuring an original score by esteemed composers like Franz Liszt, a sparrow and They Might Be Giants. Living on the planet Earth has been a long experience, but inside sources have told me that it should be over pretty soon, so I'm convinced that I can give you a fairly thorough review.

Firstly, remember the movie *Wall-E*? Many people found the opening of that movie creative, but a little dull given its lack of dialogue. Unfortunately, the beginning of Earth was even more boring. I wouldn't think anyone would want to wait 4 billion years just to see animals that are visible to the naked eye, but that's what I had to do. Frothy ooze, volcanoes and lightning were cool at first, but the "wow factor" wore thin after a few hundred thousand years. Maybe doing it this way was an art thing; *Tree of Life* was pretty weird too. What's even worse though was that it took around 4.5 billion years before anyone started speaking, and even longer until any of those people started speaking any sort of intelligible English. Didn't the makers of *The Earth* realize that foreign films aren't cool anymore? At least give us some subtitles when those protohumans are speaking Müller's theoretical "bow-wow language." If humans are only going to appear for less than half a percent of your planet, you need to make every moment of their dialogue count.

Visually, *The Earth* was pretty stunning. As mentioned earlier, for most of *The Earth* there were a lot of explosions and tidal waves and little else. Michael Bay could stand to take a few pointers from *The Earth*: although it got boring after a while, the sheer force of some of these explosions was truly stunning. I can't rave enough about the Chicxulub asteroid. You should have seen it: an explosion so awesome, the directors had to fade to black for a couple of years. *The Earth* also had some pretty amazing vistas before we destroyed them all, like the Amazon Rainforest, the African savannah and that awesome tree fort Taylor built in her backyard. But not every choice was well-made. Whoever set parts of *The Earth* in Andorra needs to reevaluate his decision. And, it might be cliché in Earth reviews, but don't even get me started on New Jersey. Even musically, for every Louis Armstrong trumpet solo, there was like four million years of pteranodons screaming at each other, and what felt like four million years of The Used

screaming at each other.

Still, *The Earth* took a lot of risks, and I'm proud of it for doing so. With the exception of some heavy construction work outsourced to beings from a planet orbiting Alinark in the mid-2,000 BCEs, a brief cameo by some BEMs in New Mexico in 1947 and of course "British" "musician" David Bowie, pretty much every single human and animal appearing on *The Earth* had never starred on a planet before. Even so, almost all of them pulled through and did an admirable job with the material they were given. I mean, it was a pretty ridiculous plot direction to expect that a civilization would build a city in a swamp, but every single one of those Aztecs made that material work. And leave it to those talented Gomphotheres to make me believe that having an enormous extended lower jaw with shovel-like tusks was a good idea. Most organisms couldn't have pulled that off even half as well. I hope to see all of these talented performers show up on a future planet; it would be a real shame if they only got to perform in one indie planet like *The Earth*.

All in all, *The Earth* was a pretty solid planet, no pun intended. It had its sad moments, like when a third of the world's humans died from the Black Death or when stringwood went extinct, but it also had its genuine laugh-out-loud moments, like when you tripped and fell down those stairs while carrying that food and Season Four of *The Simpsons*. Was *The Earth* perfect? Absolutely not. Like I said, it was way too repetitive. Even after we got past that incredibly long introduction, I still felt like the story kept repeating itself. I get it, humans hate each other and like fighting over shiny things and places to farm. It was shocking when that first monkey clubbed the other monkey with a femur, but by the time we got to the Great Roman Civil War, I excused myself and got some popcorn. It just wasn't the same anymore. At least later conflicts were souped-up with special effects. Plus, who can believe some of those plot twists? Have you seen a nudibranch? They make the ending of *Devil* seem logical. But still, *The Earth* was a surprisingly-compelling, if largely-flawed, indie planet deserving of your attention. If you haven't gotten the chance to experience *The Earth* yet, make sure you do so soon, before it ends on Dec. 21. There has been no word about an extended run, but reviews have been good so I wouldn't be surprised if it sticks around for a bit longer. After all, I came onto *The Earth* with very low expectations, but I was surprised by how compelling a little ball of water could be.



Earth Review: 4.54 out of 5.

THE PULL LIST

by Sean Fischer



Prophet #31

Brandon Graham
Giannis Milonogiannis

Brandon Graham continues to write one of the best comics to come out this year. The beauty of the book comes from its ability to concurrently create new and fantastical worlds in almost every issue, while appropriating all-but-forgotten characters from the 90s and breathing new life into them. However, *Prophet's* best aspect is its narrative's ability to continually evolve. What started in Issue 21 as a pastiche of *Conan the Barbarian* crossed with classic science fiction literature and nightmarish Freudian imagery to emphasize the solitary travels of the title character has since evolved into a character-driven space opera with a diverse cast of extraterrestrial trees, reptilian assassins and a handful of warriors that were saved from obscurity by this exceptional creative team.



Avengers #1

Jonathan Hickman
Jerome Opeña

"It started with an idea. The spark that started the fire was expansion. Our captain spoke, and gave the idea form. He said the words, and made it real. He said...assemble at dawn" reads the end of *Avengers #1*. The operant word when describing this relaunch of the Avengers would be epic: in respect to the scale of the threats, the concepts in place, and of course, the team itself. Jerome Opeña's meticulous and detailed art captures the grand scale writer Jonathan Hickman is aspiring for, however, it can leave some characters looking stiff at times. Taking advantage of the success of the blockbuster movie, the core team is comprised of Captain America, Iron Man, Thor, Black Widow, Hawkeye and The Hulk, giving those who are interested in getting into comics but unsure of where to start, a perfect place to begin, while having plenty to offer long time readers in the way of brand-new Avengers.

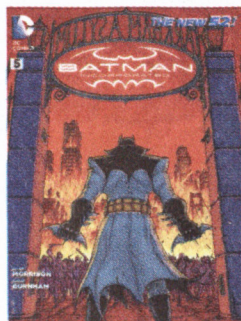


Adventure Time #10

Ryan North
Shelli Paroline

Prior to this issue, it seemed as though the *Adventure Time* comic was becoming too much of a slave to the television series, using plot lines that seemed as though they were ripped straight from discarded

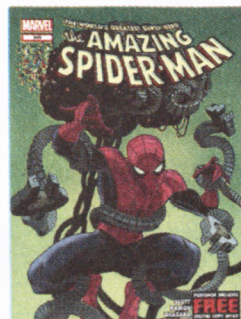
storyboards from the show. Fortunately, *Adventure Time 10* came out to refute this notion. The issue takes advantage of the medium and tells a story that would have been incredibly difficult or otherwise impossible to do in the cartoon. The comic pulls off the choose-your-own-adventure format surprisingly well, making the reader both Finn and Jake's biggest ally and their worst adversary, and gives the work an interactive aspect that young readers are sure to enjoy, while older ones can appreciate the craft behind it.



Batman Incorporated # 5

Grant Morrison
Chris Burnham

In this installment of Grant Morrison's Bat-saga that's been ongoing for six years now, we return to the post-apocalyptic nightmare that Damian Wayne, the Batman of the future, resides over. As a recurring staple of Morrison's work, we're thrust into what seems like the final act of a story we just began watching. This benefits the feel of the work because it's not overly-complex and it reflects the intense confusion one would likely feel in such a situation. Burnham's art seems off in certain places, perhaps due to a rushed schedule, but it doesn't detract from the work overall. As a self-contained story, it's an interesting prophetic image of the worst possible scenario. However, in the long term, it feels to a point like a distraction from the bigger story which ought to be coming to a head soon.



Amazing Spider-Man 699

Dan Slott
Humberto Ramos

It's difficult to follow up arguably the most talked-about single-issue comic of the year, but the team manages to deliver on an incredibly strong issue. Ramos' hyper stylized art helps detract from how dark this story could have been depicted, and thanks to a strong colorist, the pangs of longing one would normally feel when comparing Paolo Rivera's interior art when to his always-impressive covers is diminished. The real hero here is Slott when we see his capacity to juggle a larger story, reveal the method behind the madness involved, and tie up previous story arcs neatly, all while setting up the much-anticipated milestone Issue 700 and what will follow after.

KILLING THEM SOFTLY

by Nicole Kohn



Take a mobbed-up card game and add three wannabe thieves with less intelligence than flies and a shotgun. Mix these ingredients together and you'll get a recipe for disaster: Andrew Dominik's new film, *Killing Them Softly*.

The movie was adapted from the 1974 novel *Cogan's Trade* by the late criminal lawyer and author George V. Higgins. Dominik extracted some of the sharp lingo and plot found in Higgins's book, which helped producer-star Brad Pitt to play smooth-operating mob middle-manager Jackie Cogan.

Jackie must restore his shaky street cred while working with a mouthpiece lawyer played by Richard Jenkins. When the town's unnamed top man is left on his deathbed, the crime bosses are placed in the hands of an out-of-touch committee that makes the calls and passes them along to this lawyer.

To my surprise, Pitt does a solid job as a cocky realist who prefers to kill victims "softly" from a distance rather than watching them get all "touchy feely" up close. The unusual cast includes James Gandolfini, who tries to bring back the spirit of Tony Soprano as an intoxicated, hooker-loving hit man with no patience. Other actors include Scoot McNairy as worrywart Frankie, Ben Mendelsohn as a junkie and Vincent

Curatola as a demanding dry cleaner.

Most of the film consists of back-and-forth dialogue with alternating sporadic scenes of gruesome, hard-to-watch violence. When Ray Liotta's character takes a hard beating, every punch or kick will run shivers down your spine.

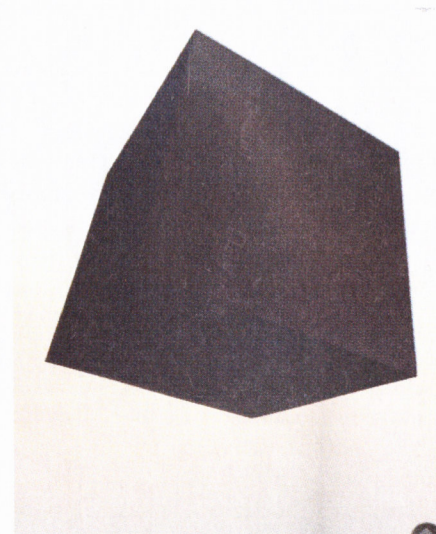
While there was a certain lavishness mixed with malice to the film, I was left wondering what the point was. There didn't seem to be any time in the film when George Bush, John McCain and Barack Obama were not talking on the television about the need to bail out Wall Street, or how everyone in America can be as one. This incessant background drone of the 2008 presidential election was extremely annoying and unnecessary.

I seemed to think I was the only one who felt this way, until people in the theatre started getting up to leave halfway through the film. It was like a comedian retelling the same joke. By the third or fourth time we heard it, it wasn't funny anymore.

The film had an exceptional cast, but didn't use them to their full capabilities. For example, there were mobsters who talked a lot but did very little. The movie needed less conversation and more of an actual point to the film. Instead, it just killed its viewers softly with boredom.

CURIOSITY

by Brianna Peterson



I just spent 15 minutes chipping away pixels of a giant virtual cube. Why? Well because I'm curious.

Peter Molyneux, with the help of developer 22Cans, created *Curiosity*.

This experiment was created to test the limits of human curiosity. There are thousands, possibly millions, of people all around the world chipping away at the same giant virtual cube. Buried at the center of the cube there is a secret, but only one person will get to see it.

This free-to-play game is available on Android and iOS with an in-app store where players can purchase items, with an in-game currency, that can help destroy larger amounts of pixels per tap.

Besides the highly priced "chisels" that will help eliminate blocks quicker, the gameplay is pretty straight forward. It takes place on a real-time server where all of the players tap the cube repeatedly. Some people draw things on the cube, one guy proposed to his girlfriend on one of the sides. It almost acts like a way of communicating with the world.

Overall, the monotonous game play sparks a curiosity that drives people to keep on playing, tapping away at the cube. All while wondering: What's inside?

BEST ALBUMS '12

Heart of Stone
by **Cher**

While this album is simply an amazing piece of art, I'd like to specifically direct your attention to the hit single, "If I Could Turn Back Time." As our untimely demise is coming quickly, this song resonates with the human species even more so than it did in 1989. I have to say Cher's not exactly reaching for the stars (even though she's claiming she is) with her time travel aspirations. Instead of repairing a relationship by taking back her words, she should try and save life as we know it. Disregarding our coming oblivion, this is a great album worth checking out. -Daniel Cashmar

Handwritten

by **The Gaslight Anthem**

Sure, The Gaslight Anthem's fourth LP is overproduced, especially when compared to their previous albums like *The '59 Sound*, but that sure as hell doesn't work against it. From its strong opening with "45" and the title track, "Handwritten," to its somber finale "National Anthem," it's enjoyable from beginning to end. -Tom Johnson

Celebration Rock

by **Japandroids**

To call this duo a pop punk band would fail to do them justice. Japandroids write power pop songs that take the best elements of The Thermals and speed them up to a fever pitch. The energy pouring through the speakers on *Celebration Rock* is so strong it defies description on paper. These guys tear it up with eight songs about embracing what so many college kids fear: their early 20s. The songwriting is bittersweet and sometimes desperately sad, but it's also brimming with Holden Caulfield's own joy at being alive. It's loud, it's crunchy, it's raw. With plenty of sing-along choruses and unrestrained shredding on

both guitar and drums, it's the perfect thing to spin while you're driving around the suburbs. -Andy Polhamus

good kid, m.A.A.d city

by **Kendrick Lamar**

When people say "hip-hop is dead," they probably mean there's no consensus anymore. But *good kid, m.A.A.d. city*, the stunning major label debut by Compton rapper Kendrick Lamar, is conceptually adventurous yet more broadly pleasing than any hip-hop album since Outkast's *Stankonia*. Does it matter that everyone loves it? Nah, but it's telling: Through the hour-long LP, Kendrick perfectly evokes a plethora of rappers—Kanye, Lil Wayne, Nas, Ghostface Killah, Andre 3000—and threads them together without sounding like a complete mess. Simply put, if you don't like any of this album, you probably don't like hip-hop at all. -Sam Liebrand

Swing Lo Magellan

by **Dirty Projectors**

Swing Lo Magellan teeters on the edge of balance, keeping the listener just out of their comfort zone with discordant sounds that they cannot place—one being a continuous loop of fingers tapping on a guitar—while the rise and fall of Dave Longstreth, Amber Coffman and Haley Dekle's voices hold their attention in a vice. But the overwhelming flow present in each and every song, and throughout the entire album itself, makes for an album that's perfect for unwinding your brain in that post-exam haze. -Rebecca Tapio

BEST MOVIES '12

Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted

The third installment in the DreamWorks Animation film series featuring zany animals, *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted* premiered in theatres on June 8. Starring notable actors including Ben Stiller and Chris Rock, the film exhibited comedy, fast-paced action and morals. The animals, both those

from the first two installments and a new collection of circus animals, tried to help each other out despite their different backgrounds and objectives as they journeyed from Monté Carlo to New York City. -Andrew Carrieri

Back to the Future

With the end times coming, I can't help but think how useful it would be to one, have a car, and two, be able to time travel with said car. In the movie, Marty travels 30 years back in time with the DeLorean. So if I had a DeLorean and I traveled 30 years into the past, I would arrive during the early Reagan administration. Reagan admitted he once saw a UFO, tried building a space defense system and made a speech about aliens to the UN, so I think perhaps I would be able to talk some sense into him about our coming demise. -Daniel Cashmar

Prometheus

A prequel and fifth installment in the beloved *Alien* series, *Prometheus* had some big shoes to fill at the time of its release, but successfully held its own. Directed by Ridley Scott, the sci-fi action film follows the voyage of the scientific vessel *Prometheus* in its search for the Engineers, humanity's predecessors. These fantastical creatures, much like their legendary *Alien* counterparts, were aesthetically realistic and contributed to the terrifying nature of the film. It also wouldn't be an *Alien* movie without the gorgeous sets of the ships and worlds, and the gore. Realizing the Engineers were never there to help them, the crew is quickly torn apart, no one ever discovering why the creatures have such a hatred for humanity. With many post-film theories circling the web, a sequel is already set to do some explaining, promising all the action and horror of the first. -Beatrice Vantapool

Skyfall

Bond. Women. Explosions. Not Quantum of Solace. What else do you want? Okay, maybe it does change up

the Bond formula greatly and treats its history with reverence while pushing forward into a new era of Bond—but we know you're there to see Daniel Craig kick ass. And said ass-kicking is undoubtedly worth the ticket.—Jesse Chang

Looper

Looper is a movie that makes you think; if you were given the opportunity to change your past, would you? It's an action-packed film with time travel and the always attractive Joseph Gordon-Levitt.—Brianna Peterson

BEST GAMES '12

The Walking Dead

The *Walking Dead* game by Telltale Games allows you to immerse yourself in a zombie apocalypse. Quick and intense decision-making affects the outcome of the game, which is broken into five episodes filled with crazy shit. Definitely a game to check out this year.—Brianna Peterson

Borderlands 2

Most FPS games these days bore me. The first *Modern Warfare* was great—it was essentially the best Tom Clancy novel never written—but afterwards the genre descended into repetition. Then I played *Borderlands 2* with friends and I sank an ungodly amount of time into it. The plot is pretty straightforward, yet the writing is incredibly witty and most of the cast was lovable. But the richest part of *Borderlands 2* is its cooperative aspect. It probably isn't worth your time and money if you play this solo, but if you have friends willing to play this with you, say goodbye to your GPA.—Jesse Chang

Halo 4

I've been more interested in the extended Halo universe than the main games. They were fun, but it was little more than "Chief shoot aliens." *Halo 4* is nothing like that. The visuals took a slipstream jump ahead and are absolutely stunning. Multiplayer keeps the good old formula, and the episodic

Spartan Ops adds value to the game. For me, it was the campaign—the relationship between the Chief and Cortana grew to be a subtle yet strong romance. I cried tears at the end. Oh, and you'll want to beat it on Legendary to see that ending. Or just YouTube it, you lazy ass.—Jesse Chang

Mass Effect 3

The ending sucks, but you should play it, especially if you've invested in the previous entries. There are lots of poignant moments in ME3—decisions and deaths come to mind—that will surely move even veterans of the series. It's not perfect; I don't like the change in Shepard's personality, and I don't really care about multiplayer. Nevertheless, it's still a good game, even if the ending made me want to throw my laptop across the room.—Jesse Chang

The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask

I have to say this is probably the best game of all time because it taught me the secrets of time travel. I have until Dec. 21 to learn how to play right, A, down, right, A, down on an ocarina and I can preserve our place in the universe for a looping three days. Unfortunately, only I will experience the passage of time, so when I die, the Earth will die with me. However, I'll be able to truly cherish the wonders of our dying planet as it plays itself through its limited loop.—Daniel Cashmar



Artwork by Jesse Chang



GAME OF PORCELAIN THRONES

POOP IS COMING

The first bathroom I saw at Stony Brook was the one I vomited in while picking classes for my first semester at college. It was in some anonymous stall on an upper floor of the SAC. Sometime after the complimentary lunch at my orientation in late July, some combination of the gross meal, my frayed nerves and the oppressive heat got the better of me. I headed to the bathroom and in just a few seconds, there was my turkey sandwich, doing laps around the toilet bowl as a resounding flush carried my lunch into the bowels of the campus.

I came to Stony Brook University with almost no thought. All through high school, I had been an underachiever, coasting along without caring much for the future. I only applied to two schools when it came time to choose a college, and when I got accepted to Stony Brook and the University of Delaware, I chose Stony Brook not because it was better, but because it was the farthest I could get from my hometown in New Jersey.

Recently I paid my first visit to a bathroom in the Chemistry building. For the sake of journalistic professionalism, I must confess: I did not take a shit, although I did find this facility to be well above par. I was simply stopping by, and really couldn't

commit to a number two. What I did do, however, was realize just how much of Stony Brook's campus remains unknown to me.

It turns out that for some people, Stony Brook takes a little getting used to: four and a half years, in my case. But get used to it is exactly what I did, and though it may seem silly now, it was the little comforts—which bathrooms on campus were the cleanest, which dining halls had the least offensive food, which DEC's had the least reading—that kept me sane when I was a scared, skinny 18-year-old who suddenly found himself four hours away from home.

My time as a journalism major was useful when it came to making friends, getting involved in student activities and carving out a career path. But because I didn't take many science or math classes, I missed out on a lot of great bathrooms simply because I was never in the right place at the right time. To the friends and readers who have encouraged me this semester to write about a bathroom in, say, Psychology, or the aforementioned Chemistry, or even (God forbid) some far-flung place like the Health Science Center, for fuck's sake, I would like to apologize for my lack of expertise. Perhaps future shitters for this column will succeed where I have failed, and provide the campus community with a better-rounded perspective on where to blast a major dookie on the DL.

But isn't that incompleteness—that one sliver of perspective on such a huge and complicated place—the beauty of a college like Stony Brook? A massive state university that, at its worst, is a crush of bodies and personalities and languages that can make you feel anonymous and alone, and at its best shows us a different point of view, and reminds us that no two experiences are the same?

I would never say that my time here was perfect. But it certainly wasn't like anything else. And that, I guess, is what it's all about. The hangovers, headaches and heartbreaks that come with being a dumb college kid—along with the inside jokes, the friendships and the life-changing moments that pile up before you can say “unemployment”—well, they could've happened to me anywhere, but they happened to me at Stony Brook. And I wouldn't have it any other way. Thanks for reading, Stony Brook, and don't stop shitting.

-ANDY POLHAMUS

The time had come when all of the mighty warriors would gather upon the field of blood. An aptly named field as the various clans of the world would send their greatest warrior to win them supremacy in the far away land of Stony Brook. It is written in legend that he who is champion may drink of the Brook and know

the secrets of the universe. He who is champion brings might and honor to their clan for the next year.

And so they gathered, he of the Union, the bronzed one of Rec, the agile Sports, the clever Physics, the simple Javits, the proud Simons, the wise Chemistry, the cunning Library, the wicked Staller, the enigmatic Wang, the powerful Admin, the indifferent Humanities, the curious SBS, the stern Life, the intelligent CS, the deceptive Psych, the trinity of Engineering, Roth of the water, TAC of the high hills, the weathered ESS and the disheveled SAC.

The competitors eyed one another and squared off, thinking of which techniques and weapons to employ against their adversary. By the end of the first wave of bloodshed, Sports had fallen to the superior Rec, Javits to Wang, SAC to Chemistry, SBS to Simons, Staller to Union, Engineering to Humanities, ESS to Library, Roth, TAC and Life all fell to Admin and CS and Psych had ended one another.

Chemistry approached Rec, laughing. He insisted that Rec simply bow his head and allow death rather than fight as the outcome would be the same regardless of his actions. Rec informed him that he was unstoppable and that the world couldn't survive without his physical prowess. Library walked to Wang's presence, sensing he would be the weakest among the remaining. Wang was sitting, legs crossed and eyes closed, simply listening to Library whisper to himself. Simons and Humanities nodded in agreement that they would be fighting one another as Union fearfully saw Admin as the last option – the almighty Admin that struck down three while Union struggled to conquer one.

Humanities dashed at Simons and found himself imprisoned within a torus. Simons told him that he was too brash to attack him head on like that and with a snap of his finger, the torus rotated through the xz-plane and ripped apart Humanities. Library circled the meditating Wang, getting closer and closer until he finally pulled a knife from within his book and stabbed at him from behind. 12 gargoyles of the Shengxiao rose from the ground about Library and surrounded him. He looked up them with fright, and they drowned him with water that spouted from their mouths. Rec leaped above Chemistry and slammed down hard with his fists, forcing Chemistry to retreat momentarily with a sprayed foam. From beneath his long white coat, he revealed two vials. He mixed the liquids within the vials together and tossed the result at Rec. The vial exploded as it hit the floor before Rec but Rec had shielded himself with a sliding platform that redirected the force of the explosion. Rec withdrew a red, glowing ring and tossed it over the head of Chemistry. An orange ball with black lines swirling about it zoomed to the ring and exploded the head of Chemistry. During all of this chaos, Admin had managed to defeat Union without any effort, it had appeared.

Four of them remained now and Simons simply pointed to Wang, to claim him as his opponent. Admin and Rec looked at each other, Rec scoffed and Admin smiled. The 12 gargoyles appeared and blasted water at Simons which he deflected with a perfectly constructed shield. A bright, vivid screen of moving colors and shapes appeared before Wang and distracted him. In that moment, Simons unleashed his torus technique and shot it at Wang. Wang had become trapped within the torus and Simons

snapped his finger to signal the xz-plane rotation. In a desperate move, Wang cried out to the wind and the Feng Shui Cannon burst a shockwave of air through the torus. Wang emerged from it and Simons fell to his knees in defeat. Snapping his own fingers, Wang released an octagonal pagoda prison on Simons and it imploded. He sighed with relief after defeating Simons and heard Rec cry out for help. Wang instinctively ran to his side.

And so there were three: Rec, Wang and Admin. Worn from their previous encounters, Rec and Wang didn't believe they could survive a battle with Admin. That's when Wang proposed the idea of an alliance to Rec. Emboldened, Admin scoffed and explained how no grouping of warriors would be powerful enough to take upon its power as long as he held the mighty saber forged in the fires of the Sacred Expulsion Chamber. As testament to its power, he gestured to the shredded remains of Roth, Union, TAC and Life. One swing of his blade, he explained, and the knees collapse. Two swings and the heart follows. Wang defiantly yelled that Admin could never take his heart.

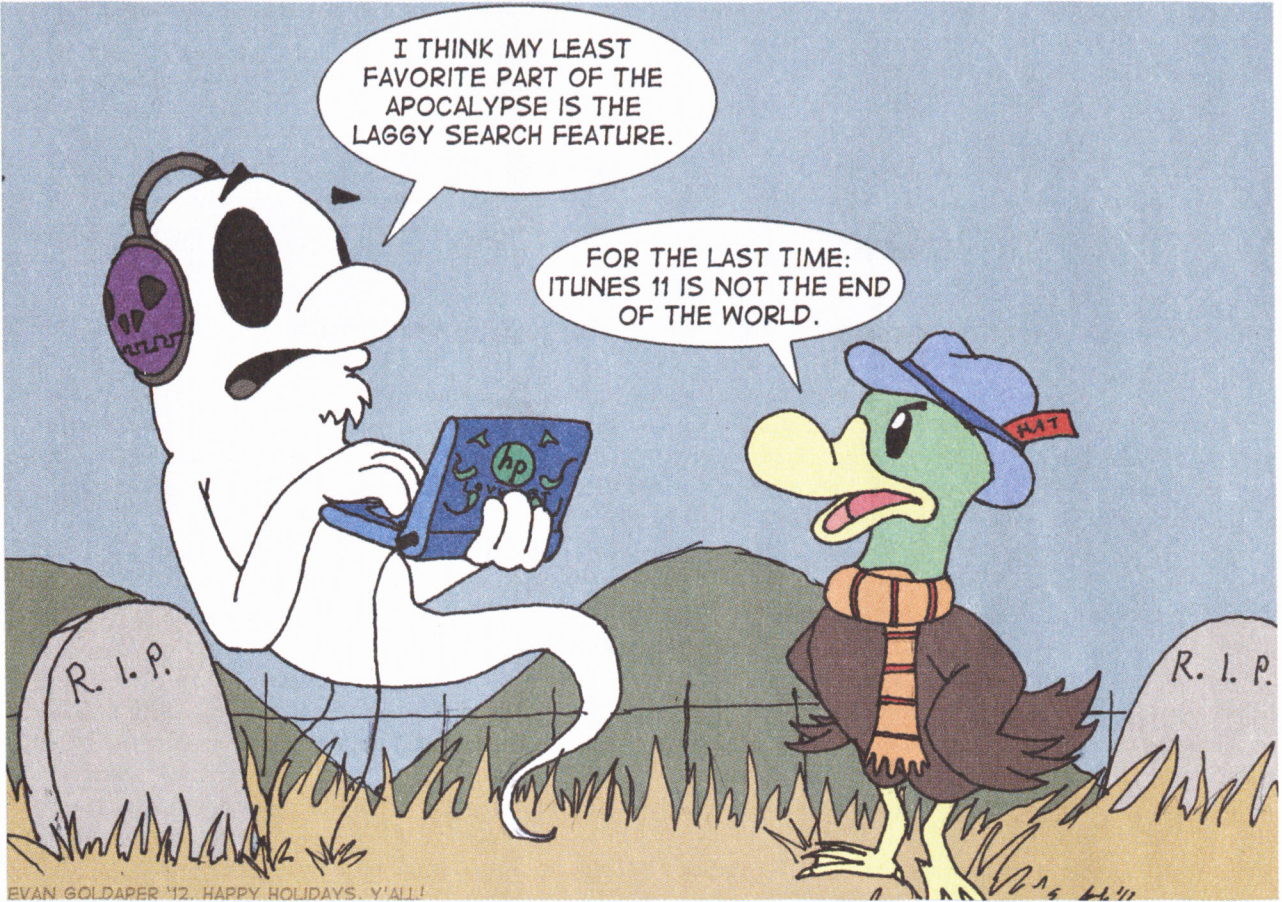
Admin had heard enough and swung his saber at Wang. His knees did indeed buckle, forcing him to collapse. Admin held the saber high above and slashed downward to deliver the killing blow. Wang countered with his Hidden Koi Pond technique and a shield of fish scales guarded him. Rec tossed his ring around the neck of the distracted Admin and his celestial ball flew toward the ring, knocking Admin over the shielded Wang. Wind gathered about Wang and the Feng Shui Cannon tossed Admin into the air. Rec leaped to the airborne Admin, threw the ring onto the chest of Wang and slammed the ball into the gut of Admin. The ball dunked Admin into Wang, destroying Admin, and nearly destroying Wang. The Hidden Koi Pond shield had shattered and Wang lay motionless.

Rec looked upon Wang's torn body, proclaiming his victory and that he was destined to be the one to drink from the fabled Stony Brook. Wang crawled and crawled, as far as his broken body would let him until he found himself in the lair of the great Red Dragon of the Labyrinth. Wang appealed to the winged embodiment of power and in its benevolence, the Red Dragon did not kill Wang but rather bestowed its power upon him. Ethereal chains tied the Red Dragon's animated power to him. Meanwhile, Rec had found the treasure all warriors seek, knelt before the Brook, cupped his hands, captured some water and drank it.

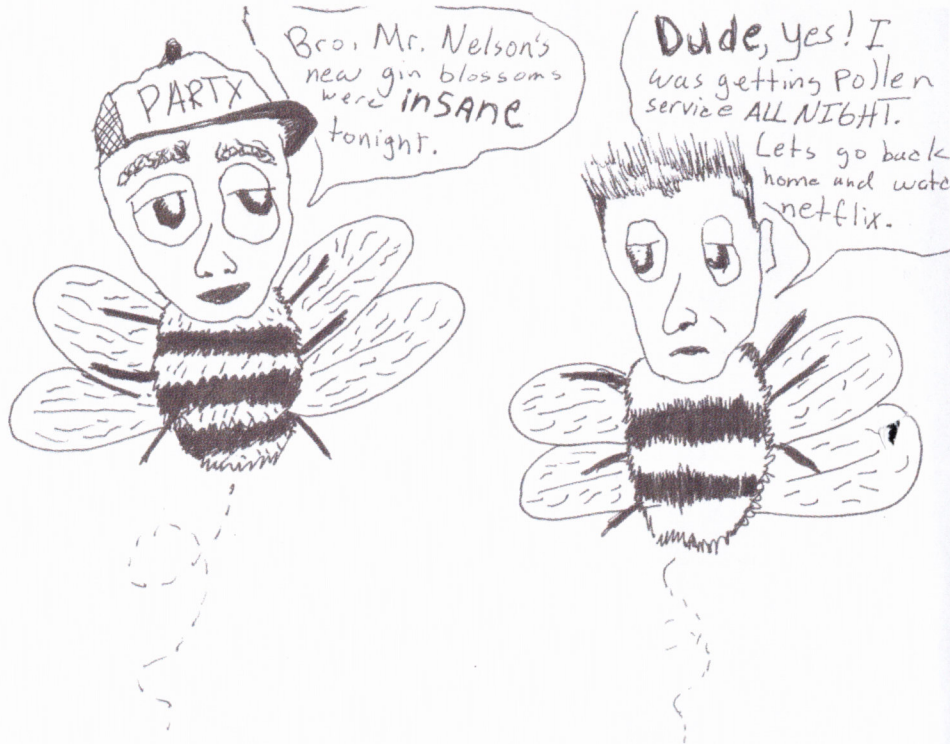
Stumbling, screaming and swiping violently at nothing, Rec had seen the truth. The enhanced Wang appeared before him and Rec gnashed his teeth in anger. He screamed to Wang that a world cannot exist without Rec and that Rec is the epitome of human achievement. The aura of Red Dragon crushed what remained of Rec and Wang observed the Brook. He too cupped his hands and drank of it. In that moment, as knowledge filled him, he realized the true purpose of this tournament. It was designed so that all will fail. It was designed so that there may be peace among the clans. Wang accepted his fate as a sacrifice for peace, even if a temporary form of it, but the spirit of the Red Dragon was that of undying vengeance. It demanded to live and Wang released its bondage to him. He fell to ground next to Rec and died.

-DANIEL CASHMAR

THE BORING ROCKS by Evan Goldaper



BRO BEES by Vincent Barone



NO HOTEL BARS IN MY LOBBY

by Marion Moseby (as told to Evan Goldaper)



Oh, hello, Stony Brook students! My name is Mr. Marion Moseby. You may remember me from the hit documentary series *The Suite Life of Zack and Cody*, which authentically chronicled my affairs as the manager of the luxurious Tipton Hotel during the years from 2005 to 2008.

If you recall, I was always extremely busy trying to keep Zack and Cody from demolishing my hotel, and though they have since moved on to college, I am still subject to similar antics from a new set of guests. Knowing that, you may wonder why I set aside valuable time to write for your juvenile and lackluster undergraduate news magazine. But what I am about to say is so imperative to your future successes that I must say it now, and wherever I can. I am here to warn you, Stony Brook. I have heard that a new Hilton Garden Inn has almost been completed on your esteemed grounds, and I must tell you that once it opens, your lives will never be the same again.

Hotels are havens for horrendous sitcom hijinks that will slowly begin to control you. Believe me. I used to have aspirations, yet now I am nothing more than a high-strung antagonistic caricature of my former self. You can only get hit with so many desserts before you too will want to abandon all hope and begin to cry yourself to sleep every night.

You see, once the Hilton Garden Inn has opened, someone will have to be at the whims of 135 rooms full of guests. And each guest will inevitably place ludicrous demands on some poor manager, or worse, the campus as a whole. For all you know, by this time next year you could be teaching some rich sap how to drive a car, serving outrageous foods at comical parties, dealing with the ghosts that will inevitably be haunting whatever rooms have numbers that end in 13, or helping the Great Gonzo build an air conditioner. All that has happened to me; it all could happen

to you.

But worst of all is the fact that this on-campus hotel will likely contain a bar. For years, I thought that the worst thing I could ever have to do was stop the craziness caused by two thrill-seeking, button-pushing preteens. I should never have leapt to conclusions. The only thing that could be worse than absurd buffoonery is absurd buffoonery caused by drunken college students. It is bad enough that the hapless hotel manager will have to deal with the aforementioned shenanigans caused by guests, let alone those caused by you and your drunken compatriots. Do you know the sort of thing that happens at hotel bars? I shudder to think what could occur if impractical, impressionable youths like yourselves got your hands on alcohol. It would be worse than Season 2, Episode 15, I assure you.

If anything can stop the havoc that will otherwise undoubtedly be unleashed, it will be the fact that many hotel bars sell their alcohol at steep prices, which will deter young vagrants from tromping in your lobby and vomiting all over your guests. Perhaps there will be no bar at all. Unlikely, but a tired manager can hope. Let us all cross our fingers.

Still, if you are reading this article, brace yourselves for the worst. Ridiculous things are guaranteed to happen once the bar opens, and your lives will never be the same again. Perhaps they will not affect you; perhaps the chaos will be contained within those 3.7 acres and never reach the elysium of your dorm. In that case, I implore you: be reasonable, children. Remember that the Hilton Garden Inn will be run by a less handsome, less charming version of me...who is still worthy of your sympathy. If you remain rational and calm, you will be able to weather this sitcom storm. I assure you.

AMERICA RUNS ON ENERGY DRINKS

by Nicole Kohn

With finals here, and papers and projects due, you've probably spent more than a few nights falling asleep on your computer keyboard or textbook. And what do we turn to when we have to get through an entire syllabus of reading because procrastinating seemed like a good idea? Caffeine.

Coffee, iced tea, soda: we buy them for a little extra umph. But when you're looking for some help to really stay awake, energy drinks are the way to go.

Whether it be Monster, Redbull, Rockstar or Amp, energy drinks are one of the first things people turn to when they are in need of caffeine, and it's no wonder why. They are available in vending machines, at gas stations or 7-eleven and they pack the most caffeine into the smallest package. They can do this because their makers market them as dietary supplements so they don't fall under FDA regulations, unlike sodas such as Mountain Dew, which is limited to a certain amount of caffeine per 12 ounces.

If you're not paying attention to how much you consume, caffeine can be more dangerous than you think, so does that mean drinks like Monster or Redbull should be regulated?

Yes, energy drinks are harmful and can cause many side effects including death, but I think it's the responsibility of the people who are drinking them to make sure they know how many they are consuming and when they need to stop.

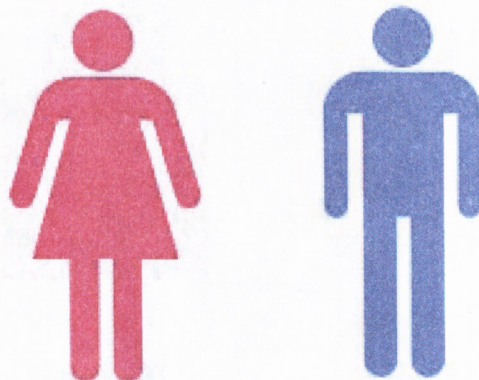
Energy drink companies make it harder for people to buy just one can when they have the promotions at 7-eleven for two-for-four or two-for-five, but after buying two, customers may end up drinking both even if they really didn't need the second one.

Restricting these drinks to age 18 and older may stop kids from walking into a 7-eleven and buying it themselves, but it won't stop them from being able to get their hands on a can. Your best solution for dealing with caffeine consumption is to get enough sleep in the first place, and resist the temptation of that "little boost." But until that happens it seems to me that America doesn't run on coffee, it runs on energy drinks.



GENDER ROLES

by Brianna Peterson



Yes

We

Can!

There has always been the misconception that women can't do heavy labor because of their sex. It's happened to me on numerous occasions, and, more often than not, I have to let it go. When the same kind of comments start to build up, however, I feel that they become necessary to address.

First off, for context, I work in a grocery store. As part of my job, I have to gather carts in the parking lot, stock shelves and break down pallets of product on a daily basis. This job wasn't my first choice, but it pays money, something a poor college student who is accumulating student loans desperately needs. With that said, I don't mind the daily workout at my job: it's like a free gym membership where I get paid to exercise.

There are instances where I go and gather large amounts of carts at a time, partly because I dislike gathering carts and partly because I don't feel like dodging the insanely-driven cars that are lurking around corners and threatening my life every other minute. I have received numerous comments of concern and surprise that I am able to do such a "laborious task." Men have offered to help me, which as kindly as I can, decline.

In another example, an elderly woman needed a carryout because she had two carts of products. When I was told to go help her, she refused and requested the help of a man instead because I was "too delicate and weak." Instances like these occur at least once or twice a week for me.

Last time I checked, women were equal to men. We can vote, work the same types of jobs and some women even hold places of power in our society. Why is it that there is the misconception that women cannot hold an equal position in careers that require labor-intensive work?

It's offensive to think that there are people who feel that women are delicate flowers who shouldn't do certain kinds of work. If only there were a way to be that delicate flower and not have to work and earn a paycheck at the same time. Until that happens, I will continue to hold my own and remain an equal part of the intensive labor workforce.

SKIMPING ON WHAT MATTERS by Hayley Parr

Next time you slip into those little silk panties and bra set or the gym clothes made by Victoria's Secret, maybe you will think about the upset they caused recently.

Or maybe you couldn't care less and continue to wear their overly-priced threads.

Victoria's Secret, the lingerie company that leaves nothing a secret, was under the spotlight this month when model Karlie Kloss walked the fashion catwalk of disgust wearing a Native American-style headdress, with just a bra and panties to match of course.

Many people were outraged by the headdress and said the company showed ignorance to the tribal culture of Native Americans, who wear the headdresses for spiritual meaning and to highlight acts of bravery and compassion.

Victoria's Secret and Kloss apologized in a public statement to anyone that was offended by the choice of headwear in the fashion show and pulled it from the TV broadcast on Dec. 4 and from their marketing campaigns.

I fully understand the people who are upset with Victoria's Secret for the headdress incident, but I didn't get upset when the late fashion designer Alexander McQueen used tartan in his revealing collections (just for the heads up I'm a Scot!)

Now, correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't Halloween a huge part

of US culture?

It's the day where people dress up in just about anything, including risqué nurse outfits for those that go for that Mean Girls "Halloween is the one night a year when girls can dress like a total slut and no other girls can say anything about it" look.

But I've never been aware of an outcry that wearing a slutty nurse outfit is disrespectful to the occupation that does wonders in helping the sick. But what difference is this?

Yes, the Native American headdress is something that maybe shouldn't be paired with skimpy underwear, but as I said: what about those offended nurses, or celebrity family members who see people dressing up as their deceased loved ones. It has similar thinking behind it?

I'm sure many people disgusted by Victoria's Secret's actions would agree with Coco Chanel when she said "Fashion is made to become unfashionable."

However I think that fashion is about taking risks and about getting creativity from the world around us. Yes, maybe pairing a spiritual headdress with a lingerie set is a bit distasteful, but have you seen the collections in their store?

For those who haven't, let's just say, don't take your grandma on a trip there.

OH BABY! by Hayley Parr

Some are overjoyed at the news and think it will be the best of British, and others are in the mind frame that it will be the spawn of Satan, but I just hope that it doesn't come out a redhead—for Prince Harry's sake!

Of course I am referring to the news that the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's are expecting their first child.

The royal baby that will make Kate and Wills proud parents will be a new addition to Windsor, and has had the British press, public and also internationals going mad.

I was the first to break the news of the baby to my mother, across the pond in Scotland, because I heard it before she did. Despite the fact she was listening to the radio, the news had not aired until the broadcasted news slot, which I thought was odd, considering its importance. Anyway, you would have thought I was the one who was a Duchess and who was expecting a royal baby based on her ecstatic reaction!

What will it wear? What will it be pushed in? What will it be called? Is it twins? There are just some of the questions every royalist and publication has had, and they're bound to continue.

Computer buffs have already conjured

up what Kate and Wills's child will look like through a modified photographic generator.

British bookies have also been cashing in on this news and taking bets on what their child (or children if it's twins) will be named. Victoria, Diana, Francis, John and Charles are just some of the favorites.

Contesting the front pages with the Leveson Report, the news of this baby came early as Kate was admitted to hospital with severe morning sickness.

However, instead of leaving the Duchess to gain her strength in peace, prank calls were made to King Edward VII hospital from an Australian radio station claiming to be the Queen asking for the news update on Kate. Surprisingly, the nurses fell for the joke and gave away information telling the station that the Duchess was stable.

Kate was released from the hospital after a few days and is now looking healthier than I have ever seen her. It must be that pregnant glow!

I am overjoyed with the news. It is not until you leave your home country that you realize how it is portrayed, and sometimes I feel that the UK is looked

upon badly through acts of politicians and greedy bankers.

Although some would very much disagree, I think that the royal family is our best asset.

I feel that the way that Wills and Harry handle life in the spotlight was handed down to them by their late mother Diana. They were breastfed as babies, went to day schools and were by their mother's side all the time. All these aspects of growing up were new to royalty.

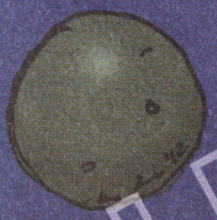
I believe that Wills and Kate will make the most perfect parents to a little boy or girl who will have the most normal upbringing a royal child can have. Kate's skill of being a peoples' princess continues to shine as she makes appearances throughout the world modelling herself as a Diana like figure.

It will be quite some time until the Duchess pops the little royal out as it is predicted she is only about eight or nine weeks through her pregnancy.

Although the baby will most definitely be born with a silver spoon in its mouth, I think we will see an even more modern generation of royalty.



THE LITERARY SUPPLEMENT



Notes Left on Windshields

by Liz Kaempf

There are months worth of poems I should have written
 So many lines and rhymes and words
 Thoughts and feelings bursting through skin and bones
 trying to make themselves known.
 If I get them on paper then they're not trapped in my body,
 Then maybe there would be peace
 and rest.
 But I tucked them away in corners.
 Recesses.
 Hid them from you, and myself,
 Because what good does it do
 to have a gut-spilling, heart-wrenching conversation
 with yourself?
 What's the use of speech with no one else around to listen?
 So many one-liners passed by
 Fleeting descriptions of broken hearts and unfinished business
 They came and went with no resolution.
 Poems don't erase the feeling of being burned alive,
 suffocated,
 exsanguinated,
 enucleated.
 Words don't remedy the pain,
 But rather, document it.
 A post-it note reminder that you feel like death but you've never died.
 Keep it on the fridge, held up by a magnet in the shape of a flamingo,
 bright pink,
 that you bought on vacation in Florida six years ago.
 You don't need to read the words to remember what they say.
 Looking at it from a peripheral is painful enough.
 Set an alarm in your smart phone so you don't forget to feel like hell today
 And tomorrow
 And every day until you can rip up that note
 Liberate yourself
 And throw it in the garbage with gas receipts, rotten fruit, and burrito
 wrappers.

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Home of the Big Duck

by Andy Polhamus

You met her at school in the city, but Lydia came from a little town upstate whose name conjured up images of wooden houses and dusty roads as viewed through the lens of a brilliant summer day. Walkkill, New York; not much more than a collection of farms and a pizza parlor sitting together at the foot of the mountains a couple hours north of the city. The pictures in her dorm room made growing up in Walkkill look more like a record company promotion than an adolescence: Lydia smiling on the side of the highway in front of a field of sunflowers; Lydia and her sister standing on the edge of a cliff in two-piece bathing suits overlooking a river where three teenaged boys waved from the bank.

She had looks to match the town. Fine, dirty blond hair fell in waves to her elbows, which were gently tanned from giving swimming lessons at the community pool. She could laugh with just her eyes. You noticed this in a diner once when she made an off-color remark about the sausage links that came with your pancakes.

You remember the details of Walkkill, New York distinctly because it's where you were this morning when your alarm went off. You and Lydia were sitting on the river bank and she was wearing a green dress. She had just parted her lips, laughing, when Chime Number Two played on your cell phone. You woke up in air

conditioned semi-darkness, and your boots and gloves sat by the bedroom door, waiting for Tuesday's run.

Tuesday's run always means grass. Awake now, you slip into your Dickies and grab a grass day shirt—more stained than the nicer ones you like to wear for cleaner jobs—from a basket of fresh laundry. All of them are the same: HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT, CLAYTON, N.J. printed just above the useless breast pocket. But once you've worn a shirt to work on grass day, that's the only place you can wear it: hanging on the back of a truck with the August sun searing your face and, as so many of your co-workers learned the hard way, fading your tattoos.

It was going to be another boring summer, you thought to yourself a month ago, but at least you'd gotten your old job back, and this year's raise was almost enough to make picking up trash, mowing public lawns and laying hot asphalt worth it. It was also going to fund a trip to the Hamptons, where Lydia had taken a new job, and your savings would be enough to get you started while you looked for work in New York after school ended. Somewhere in there, the two of you could get to know each other the way you'd wanted since you first saw her smile.

You clock in about six. You meet RJ and Carl and shoot the shit for a minute before heading out on the route. RJ has broken up

with his girlfriend again, and Carl's daughter is going to be in some pageant this weekend. But as soon as the truck starts up and you take your place on the back, conversation stops. If you can ignore the rush of traffic, the diesel rumble of the engine and the grind of the compactor, the grass run is a pretty quiet job.

You roll down Grove Street just as the sun comes up. In half an hour, the streets of town will be crowded and bright yellow. It'll be impossible to tell it was ever dark at all. But for a few minutes on Tuesday, you see the lawns of Clayton still wet with dew. The smells of shampoo or coffee or last night's keg party drift out of windows and hang in the humid air just in time for the grass truck to rupture the morning. Fresh editions of The Gloucester County Times lie patiently in driveways and on doorsteps, waiting to inform residents of the new Pizza Hut going up on Delsea Drive and editorialize on the county freeholder's stance on fracking.

But before long the sun gets high and it's not pretty anymore. It's just hot. Each trash can full of mown grass weighs between seventy-five and a hundred pounds. It's tough, but you get used to it, and the belly you develop every winter from all those carb-heavy dinners gets balanced out by the new swell that appears in each bicep by the end of May.

Eventually, you get into a

rhythm. You step off the back of the truck just as it comes to a halt in front of each house. For the wealthier neighborhoods, where everyone has landscapers, there's no point in getting back on after each can is empty. Instead, you follow the truck down the street as it goes. You grab the can by the handle and lift it high enough to catch the bottom with your other hand, then stagger over to the trash truck and tip its contents into the rusted bin. If the can is too heavy, you rest it on the edge of the bin and flip it over, then toss it to the pavement. Residents complain about it sometimes, but none of them want to stand on the back of a truck when it's 95 and humid, so fuck them. This philosophy is in fact the official policy of the highway department, but you won't find it written down anywhere.

The reek of the grass depends on a number of things. There's the overall quality of the grass, for one, and of course the length of time it sits on the curb before you pick it up. If it's recent, it's not too bad. There's the dust, of course, which kicks up your allergies, but other than that, it's just vegetation.

Older cans are worse. These are the cans that have been left by less considerate homeowners—the ones you see sometimes on Wednesday or Thursday afternoon, mowing the lawn and leaving the clippings for a full six days with plenty of sun and, if you're particularly

unlucky, a thunderstorm or two to ensure that the grass decays. It starts at the bottom of the can, so the last graying, chemical-pesticide-scented chunks fall into the bin just in time for you to take the deep breath you so desperately need as hour four closes in. If it rained last night, you simply add anywhere from ten to twenty pounds to the weight of each can and multiply the stench of rot by four. If it's raining on the job, you throw your shirt and gloves away when you get back to the garage for lunch.

There was one day, right before Lydia graduated and you went back to Jersey for the summer, when she was looking for apartments and asked you for your help. She knew how you felt—a week before she had smiled, in fact, late at night in the passenger seat of your fatigued Camry—and admitted that she'd seen it coming all along. You were freshly single, had sucked it up for once and done the right thing, breaking it off with the poor girl when you realized your friendship with Lydia was getting out of hand. It was cold and she shivered in her denim jacket before shifting her gaze shyly forward. But she never stopped smiling.

Carl yells your name at this point, and you step out of the way just in time for an errant black Nissan to roll past at a speed exceeding the legal limit, its annoyed driver sucking the green straw of his iced coffee as he glares at you and

mutters. You see the word "fuck" cross his lips before you heave the last can of the block to the ground and take your place on the truck. There's a slight breeze, and if you tilt your head just right, you don't even notice the shit smell that comes from the truck, your boots, your hands.

You went with Lydia from place to place, smiling and shaking hands with landlords and letting each one think you were her boyfriend. After the first time it happened, you mentioned it to Lydia.

"So what?" she said.

You didn't know what she meant by that, but you were excited that she never corrected the men who smiled knowingly as they squeezed your hand.

Six weeks and a few paychecks later, when you finally drove the five hours to visit her, she didn't live in any of the places you looked at that day in spring. Instead, she'd done one better and rented half a house in a little town called Flanders. It was a poor town by nature, but its proximity to Westhampton Beach meant cheap housing for people new to the area, and pretty much anything that wasn't New Jersey looked like heaven to you. Besides a few bait shops and a 7-11, Flanders' main distinguishing feature was a two-story building shaped like a giant duck. Lydia lived just beyond the duck, which was a source of pride for the locals and a source of shame for her.

The first time you saw

the big duck, your chest thumped with joy.

After you'd both had a few drinks, she rewarded you with the kiss you'd wanted for so long. Her mouth was soft and fit more perfectly on yours than you could've imagined. You fell asleep with your arm around her waist, amazed at the perfection with which your fingers matched the curve of her hip.

The next day could have been an impressionist oil painting: a trip to the beach in blinding sun punctuated by a nap on the sand. She closed her eyes while you rested your hand on the small of her back. You looked too poor for the Hamptons and both of you knew it. Nobody else at the beach that day was a garbage man during the week, but then again, you wouldn't be one for much longer, not once you finished school, and then you and Lydia would look perfect together, even if you didn't match the old money or the seersucker shorts of the people out east.

The water was glassy green and her thighs were shiny with salt water. Her makeup ran. It made you love her more. That night, at a dockside restaurant, you both ate flank steak and drank gin and tonics.

You pause now, putting down your last trash can. As soon as Carl empties the truck at the dump, this week's grass day will be over.

Lydia tried to break it to you gently, but there's no gentle way to tell someone

you're not interested after a two hundred dollar dinner on the second night of a three-day weekend in the most expensive town you've ever seen.

You were lying on the bed in her new place. She'd only been there a week, and besides the bed, there wasn't any furniture except the kitchen table and a futon she was trying to replace. Waiting out the night in the living room would not be an option. She looked up at you with those pretty country eyes and said she was sorry. She got mascara on your shirt, but you were too busy wincing to notice.

"It did feel nice kissing you," she said.

"It just also felt like kissing my best friend."

A short pause, and when you don't respond, a second time:

"I'm sorry. You're my best friend."

It was midnight when she told you. You drove home under more stars than you'd ever seen before, stopping only for gas on I-95 around Bordentown, playing the scene over and over again until the memory was rubbed raw and tired by your unrelenting brain. When you woke up the next morning, your undershirt still smelled like her perfume. A single long blond hair was caught in the stubble of your neck.

On the back of the grass truck, you remember that morning. You were all alone. It was the first time you woke up feeling old.

A Poem I Wrote When I Was Thirteen

by Arielle Rose Dollinger

With each window comes a different office. With each office comes a different person.
With each person comes a different story.
With each story comes a different plot.
With each plot comes a different twist.
With each twist comes a different message.
With each message comes a different lesson.

With each window comes a different office.
With one office comes a man bustling about, seemingly looking for something.
We hear him mumbling under his breath, to no one but himself.
We see him pick up a stack of papers, and then replace them again, disappointed.
We watch as he sits down in his luxurious black armchair, and opens a bottle of Aspirin.
The phone rings, and he doesn't pick up.
We may never know who it was, and why they called.

With each window comes a different office.
With one office comes a woman, just sitting at her desk, smiling.
A letter sits motionlessly on her desk, right in front of her point of focus.
We notice that she is reading it.
An even larger grin appears on her face.
The letter is the cause of her smile.
We may never know who the letter was from, and what it said.
With each window comes a different office.
With one office comes a man mounting a ladder leading up to a high bookshelf.
As he approaches the tippy top, he pulls down a large, heavy book.
He looks as if he will not be able to take the book down with him due to its size.
We see him arrive safely down to the floor.
He brings the mysterious book to his desk, and flips through its mystical pages.
We may never know why he chose that book, and what book it was.
With each window comes a different office.
With one office comes a woman, pacing her office floor.
As she paces, she slowly sips a bottle of Aquafina water, eyes closed.
We hear her low murmur but cannot make out any words.
Finally, she sits down at her desk, and begins to fill out some kind of form.
She has a puzzled look on her face when she comes to the last question.
We may never know who she was, and what the form was for.

New York City is filled with magical people and things.
No one person can discover them all by themselves.
With each building comes numerous shining windows, their light reflected by the sun.
With each window comes a different office.
With each office comes a different person.
With each person comes a different story.
With each story comes something new and exciting.



Photo by Jasmine Haefner

Vocal Poetry

by Bryan Carroll

show me all the dates
and countless spots
where we tighten up
the foreplay
and made some noise
my motto was
to play my loud pipes
for a long time
to a crazy ma-lar-key
called vocal poetry

Travelers

by Bryan Carroll

red leather cushions
share my apartment
with countless imprints of travelers
and a few nickels left behind

Don't reach for the skim milk
I say absent-mindedly
to the girl with grounded almonds

Coffee

by Bryan Carroll

What she doesn't know
is that when we are walking
together, before we reach the car
I reach for her hand

Afterwards, it seemed like a dream
before she broke my heart
and asked for decaf.

My Name Is...

by Jared Chamoff

I have always been one to judge a person by his or her name. That adage of not judging a book by its cover is not something I abide by, particularly when it comes to names. Even before meeting a person I feel like I can pinpoint his or her notable characteristics simply by knowing his or her name. If you are a Bertha or Mabel you have been carrying an AARP card since the Nixon administration. If you are a Brittany you have an IQ score 50 points below Bertha or Mabel's age. And if you are a Honey Boo Boo you have an inbred genetic mutation.

My name is Jared. I have always thought completely unbiasedly that Jared was a great name. If you are a Jared you always know the right things to say. If you are a Jared you are remarkably the quarterback of the football team, the Homecoming King, the Class president, and in your free time you help out at the local orphanage and or soup kitchen. Basically a Jared is the most awesome person you will ever meet. I find myself giving any Jared the benefit of the doubt when it comes to judging his character. If Bernie Madoff was named Jared Madoff, I would probably try to rationalize his financial crimes. "I mean, he wasn't trying to hurt anyone... and his name is Jared so he has to be a standup guy," I would argue.

It seems that I am not the only one who has feelings affiliated with the name Jared. My mother named me after the character "Jarrod Barkley" from the 1960s western TV series *The Big Valley*. This Jarrod is almost too much of an over-achiever to fit my Jared mold. He is an attorney, the eldest son of the family, and extremely compassionate. This Jarrod acts as a sort of moral compass: providing the family with well-reasoned advice in their Wild West surroundings. My mother, an avid watcher of the show, acknowledges all of this Jarrod's heroic qualities, but mainly just gushes about how cute she finds him. Her infatuation is the reason for my name. I just hope that I can live up to be as great as the fictional "Jarrod" my mother so admires.

While I find my mother's feelings on my name rather adorable other people's preconceived thoughts on "Jared" make me cringe. These are the people that when they hear my name think of Jared the Galleria of Jewelry or the Subway restaurant franchise's spokesperson Jared Fogle. In a society so immersed in consumerism I can understand why people make these connections. Advertisements for Jared-related companies plague the commercial breaks and seep into our culture's collective subconscious. In a kind of Pavlov's dogs situation people hear my name, remember those ads and proceed to blurt things like: "HE WENT TO JARED!!" While I empathize with the vice-like grip these ads have on our minds it does not stop me from finding the constant mention of these Jared-related commercials to be the worst.

A recent mention of Subway Jared came at the

Barbershop. It seemed like a friendly enough place, with those respectful barbers carefully tending to each customer's respective head. So naturally I was caught off guard when the next available barber called my name and asked, "Wow Jared have you lost weight?" I was confused as to what he was talking about, as I have always looked like Christian Bale in *The Machinist* if he was more emaciated. "After your Subway diet," he continued, "you look so skinny!" I should have felt kind of flattered: he was telling me that I looked like the AFTER effects of the Subway diet. For him, a Jared is someone who eats Subway to lose weight and get famous. Even though his comment was lighthearted I still found that after the umpteenth Subway reference it was as unpleasant as ever.

Despite the fact that I find these references to be tedious, I guess they just come with the territory of having the name. And if I am allowed to have opinions on people based off of their name then let people say what they want regarding mine. I just wish it were as socially acceptable to call Bertha and Mabel old and Brittany stupid as it is for people to tell me that "it can only be Jared" or how much they enjoy Subway's \$5 foot long sandwich special in this economy. If only *The Big Valley's* Jarrod was relevant this millennium...



Photo by Elizabeth Grey

Personal Boundaries

by Liz Kaempf

It's easy
to still be so young.
to forget to worry.
to be fearless.
If a child falls while ice skating
they simply get back up
and skate forward,
until losing balance again
not even bothering to brush the ice from their knees.
Standing on skates at 21 is petrifying.
Scared to fall flat
you cling to the plexi-glass walls
and pray for time to speed by
so you can leave and pretend you accomplished something.
Fact is, you've fallen too many times
and not always a two-foot drop on ice.
Sometimes it's an ocean
and sometimes it's a brown suede couch
more often it's a bonfire
and you cling to plexi-glass walls
so you don't lose your flesh in the flames.
Because you've had too many drops
and your skin hasn't grown back yet.



Photo by Elizabeth Grey

Murder.

by Brianna Peterson

I have this stabbing sensation in my heart.
All because you see right through me.
My insides are spilling out
as you tear me apart.
This feeling is overwhelming.
It's as if you are murdering me.

Just pass me by on the street
and allow me to drown
in my own misery.
The air between us
is suffocating me.
It's as if you are murdering me.

My thoughts are getting tangled up
in my head.
They are knotted up.
They are strangling my feelings
and pulling at my thoughts.
It's as if you are murdering me.

Tears are spilling out.
I'm beginning to form an ocean.
I don't know how to stay afloat
in all of this pain and sadness.
I'm drowning.
It's as if you are murdering me.

I cannot seem to stop this;
these feelings as if I'm being killed on the inside.
Why don't you just murder me already?

A Synopsis of Drowning

by Brianna Peterson

Kiss Me Judas

by Jim Davis

Kiss Me Judas

I'll carry the cross
Across my shoulders,
Splintering into my back.

I'll carry that cross
Shoulder that weight,
And turn my back on you.

I'm dying to be a martyr.

But I'm no savior.
I'm just a man
Who crowned himself,
And scourges himself
Hoping to redeem myself
For resenting those I redeem.

So kiss me Judas.
Play your part.

I need you.

I never knew how it got started;
the idea of your life flashing before your eyes.
That while you drown, just the act of being submerged,
interferes with time and space.
Why not have an over exaggerated narrative?
Or perhaps you'd prefer an elaborate presentation?
Instead, you are left with a synopsis,
as if your existence was insignificant.

There is no one here to save you.
All those swimming lessons have gone to waste,
just because of a little extra weight?
There are no life preservers and no possible ways to stay afloat.
It's hard when cement and rope are weighing you down.
One must maintain a focus; think.
Simply allow the water to cleanse your mind.
Just keep breathing, at least until you see how the synopsis
ends.



Photo by Rebecca Tapio

Are There any Icebergs in the Long Island Sound

by Michael Ruiz

The surf went in and out and in and out and we watched from a bluff above.

"Do you think there are any icebergs in the Long Island Sound?" she asked.

"Not any more," I said.

I didn't like to be barefoot but I was up there on the bluff with my feet in the sand and my jeans rolled up and my beater hanging from the back pocket. I leaned back, the fat barrel of my malt rung with sand around the bottom and bottle caps half in the sand around us. She smiled, arm raised up with her bottle and her breasts spilling out of her bathing suit and I stared at her stomach and the way the button floated with her breaths. She tilted the bottle and drank and I sat back and drank and looked away from her to the water where the sun was long gone and the moon drank at the edge of the sound.

"They'd be pretty in the moonlight," she said, after she looked too and I saw on her lips that she loved it.

"You're pretty in the moonlight," I said.

The stars came out and winked at us and we toasted the stars and slid our toes into the sand. Everyone else had gone but we didn't mind because the night was young and the wind was warm. I didn't smoke so she quit and the fire had gone out so she came over and sat by me to keep warm and I put my arm on her shoulders and looked at my arm against hers. She was darker but not by much and she laughed at me but I hadn't been out much because of work so I didn't mind.

"Do you think the Indians sat here and watched the icebergs?" she asked.

"I think the icebergs were gone before the Indians were here," I said.

She pinched my side and I pinched her nose and leaned away and she followed and stuck her tongue in my ear and

found some sand and backed off and spit the other way. I pinched her nose again and laughed at her and she elbowed me hard enough to maybe leave a bruise.

"You know the icebergs made Lake Ronkonkoma," she said.

"I think you mean glaciers," I said.

I kicked the smoldering log from our fire and when it rolled over I saw the glow of the smallest of embers. She asked what I was doing when I got up and I put my index finger against her lips and climbed up the rest of the bluff to where some trees grew and found some twigs and bigger sticks and came back down and fixed the fire. She understood. When the flame stopped asking for my help I sat back by her and with my back to the flame and the moon I could see how beautiful she was again. She asked what I was looking at so I knelt down and kissed her and she kissed me back. I rolled her on the sand and we came together up on the bluff for the last time.

"Glaciers and icebergs don't matter," she said. "Soon we won't have either one."

"You might be right," I said.

The bugs were coming out and I didn't like to be bit so I brought her back up to my truck and she sat the wrong way on the front seat and we talked and drank. Her eyes lit up her whole face as we talked and her enthusiasm made me feel better about the world. I hated the way the pedals felt on my bare feet. I went to put my shirt on and she stopped me so I drove without it. When we got to Pat's, she leaned over like she wanted a kiss so I leaned over to kiss her and instead she slapped me right across the cheek. She was right handed but she used her left and it stung and she snarled at me and hopped out and that wasn't the last I saw of her but it was the last time she drank on me.



Painting by Arielle Dollinger

The Tree on North Country Road

by R.J. Huneke

The tree bent sharply to the left
The weight of the world
Had left its mark upon
The other side,
And what remained was rooted strong
And fully
Sprouting new lines of branches
Up and out
But mostly up
For a time the tree might be
Lopsided;

But no storm, no wind, no winter,
No dense icicles' tails,
No lichen, moss or beards,
No lightning strokes
Will ever be able to win
Against it,
For the foundations of love
Welcome the
Ground-kissing-roots
The tree is joined, for all time,
With the earth.

Advice for Suitemate Disagreements

by Maegan McDonald

My offense was extreme and unnecessary and I am truly remorseful. I am aware that I should not have tampered with the circuit breaker in my suite and I acted in a brief moment of frustration. Such behavior cannot be tolerated. My actions could have seriously affected other members of my living arrangement.

My suitemates should not have to be cold because I decided to lose my patience. Seventy-four degrees is a perfectly acceptable temperature for mid-March, it is still chilly in New York at this time. I should have merely adjusted, following the example of some of my suitemates and donned smaller or thinner articles of clothing as to not be overly warm. Turning off the heat entirely to the common room was not the appropriate answer; in fact, there are many better ways in which I could have responded.

I should have tried a few more times to convey to the opposite party my point of view and found a way to make a compromise possible. Halfway between 67 and 74 is neither 74 nor off. Both sides were in the wrong and the ideal would have been 70/71 and I should have been able to reasonably discuss this with my suitemates. Next time there is a disagreement

such as this I could invest in a calculator or seek a neutral mediator. I also need to understand that not everyone was raised to be aware of their surroundings. I am not paying for the heat in this room so if the opposing party wants it all the way up then it is not at my expense and I have no reason to be so bothered by it and should therefore have just left it alone. Turning it off was wrong, when my suitemates return from class it should be at the temperature they are comfortable with as it is their home as well. When I left the common room I should have turned it back up for them so it would be as they liked it when they chose to inhabit the space. If I liked it cooler I could have adjusted only when I inhabited the space and put it back at a median level when I was not. Being aware of solutions such as this is a reasonable way to behave and how I plan to behave in the future as to be more considerate of others.

Tampering with one circuit could have potentially blown the wiring system for the whole building. It could have potentially started a fire or worse, left everyone without heat in the dead of spring. I did not think of the other inhabitants of the building when I tampered with the electrical system. For someone with a potential

mental or physical ailment to be without heat could be very detrimental. Not everyone has the ability to adjust their internal temperature. Someone in the building could have a neuromuscular disorder such as Myotonia Congenita or Paramyotonia which could cause them to feel sensitivity to cold. Depression can also cause an increased sensitivity to low temperatures. To think that my actions could potentially irritate a preexisting condition or cause someone any level of discomfort is truly awful. In the future as to avoid this nature of infraction I will be sure to think of how my actions can affect everyone around me. I am not the only person in this situation and I cannot go through life only thinking of myself, acting with no regard for my peers. I must take into account the possible consequences for those around me as well as for myself before I behave in such an inconsiderate manner.

Heating and cooling systems are not toys and it is not my place to touch, tamper, adjust, or fix any part of the building property no matter the circumstance. This system is green and adjusts itself as to not waste energy or oil. When it reaches its max of 74 it stops heating and only turns back

on when the temperature drops below 74 all the while maintaining the heat and not wasting any energy at all. I should have just realized this instead of overreacting and turning off the heat.

If someone were to have turned off the heat to my room I would have been upset too and I would have responded by having intelligent and calm conversation with them, asking them to turn it back on. In the event they were to be completely unreasonable and resolved to leave it off then I would first adjust my own behaviors, such as putting on warmer clothing. If the situation prolonged more than a few hours, instead of overreacting and reporting an offense, I would instead try again having a discussion involving all those members in the living arrangement in which we would discuss a compromise that everyone who used the common room would find acceptable. No situation of this measure ever needs to be resolved in such extreme measures. I plan to behave in a manner more thoughtful of everyone and the world around me in the future as to be sure that no disagreement ever comes to such an unfruitful end.

Pine Hollow Road

by R.J Huneke

Ross ran out of gas again. The fall evening had barely begun, but the day had already been long and drawn out. Ross's fiancé had been seen safely home, after an eight hour hospitalization, and his mother-in-law had been brought to her Nissan SUV in the Port St. Charles ER parking lot so that she could go home to relax. And with the essentials of knighthood already shouldered, Ross drove toward the gas station, because he was not going to make it back without gassing up the Camaro.

The car's souped up 3.8L engine seemed to cough and hiccup all at once going down the second rolling hill of Pine Hollow Road, and as the next uphill ascent began the Camaro seemed to shimmy and sputter and give up any ability to advance forward. The artist was perplexed. He was an equidistant couple of miles from home and the station.

"You've got to be kidding me," said Ross. He tried turning the key in the ignition and though the vehicle turned on, the wheezing and gurgling that came from the engine indicated a lack in its life's blood that stalled any moving forward.

"Damn it! I was just going to get you gas, Cammy," he said.

The plea went unheard. Ross rose and exited the car. A gust of chilly wind belched and wet fall leaves fell all over him; the lonely road was heavily wooded so that the houses alongside it were barely visible at night. The dark seemed dense.

"Why did I have to wear shorts tonight?" But deep down Ross knew the answer: he had put on his comfortable mesh shorts after the horrific hospital ER had been vacated and he had wanted to try and relax while he waited on his bedridden fiancé. When Ross's mother-in-law needed a ride back to her vehicle he had not thought to change, as the chilly September night would be kept outside his Camaro after all. Something had other plans for him.

Ross strode briskly down the next hill and then up and down and along the dark, wooded street bereft of lights. The march to his apartment, which was only a couple of miles, took fifteen minutes out of his life.

Ross lifted the full gas can from the cobweb-filled corner of the garage. Then he checked on his love; she kissed him and bid him a swift return back to her.

"I can paint a hundred pieces this year, but I couldn't get the car to move another freaking mile to the gas station, babe."

"Be careful people drive crazy on that road, and there are no lights for miles."

Ross, red can in hand, went on his way back up Pine Hollow Road. The wind rustled the yellow, brown, and orange leaves about his clumsy feet; they glistened on the ground with drops of moisture in the light of the autumn half-moon.

Ross shivered as he went up the first slope. Each step seemed to go slower, even though he was walking quickly to meet his journey's end. He entered a tree-laden tunnel with overhanging limbs making an angled steeple overhead. Its mouth grew steadily narrower until pitch-blackness was all that remained before him.

"Why did she have to say that to me?" asked Ross to no one in particular. The dark had rattled him.

A car's headlights flooded his vision, and he scurried off the barely existing shoulder and onto someone's lawn dousing his feet and sandals. Ross's heart thrummed as the car slid the entire width of the street toward him and barely stayed on the leaf-strewn pavement just shy of hitting him where he stood.

As Ross descended the Pine Hollow hillock, it became more apparent that there were no street lamps to speak of. That's weird, he thought. The only light he could see came from the half-moon that poked through the roof of the

woods in spots and the faint blinking of his own Camaro's emergency flashers a mile away.

The air grew thick with moisture, though rain was barely discernable; it felt like the humidity was causing the Long Island air to sweat. God, I hope she's all right.

Ross wiped his damp palms onto his mesh shorts as he hiked toward his car full of doubt and worry for the woman he loved that was further fueled by the unnerving roadway. He continued on toward an end to the walking, an end to a dismal day that threatened all he cared for, and an end to a night where he ran out of gas for what had to be an unlucky seventh time in his life.

"Freakin' GM gas gauge!" he said. Frustration filled Ross's tongue, was palpable. And his growing fear did not help.

Ross's fury at himself, his car Cammy, his near-useless gas gauge, and his overall misfortune flared and then died in an instant: he worried about his love; he wanted to know she was alright; he wanted to be by her side and not walking with a few gallons of black gold to feed a car's addiction and move off the side of the black road; and he wanted to paint his fiancé.

A rushing sound tore at Ross's ears and gave him a head's up. He bowed his legs before he was hit. The car drove along the wrong side of the road, flying, and crashed into Ross; with the whoosh for warning he was able to jump aside so that the impact only grazed him. But as the bumper connected with his side, Ross fell off the road and down the hill and into the woods to the side of Pine Hollow.

There was a snapping of branches and crunching of underbrush as Ross thudded and tumbled. When he stopped the smell of pine and the reek of some decaying animal filled his breath and hit him hard. The blinking car lights were gone, as was any hope of seeing the half-moon. Darkness was thick about the wood.

"What the fuck?"

Ross lifted his cell phone and brought a flashlight App up to illuminate his surroundings. He could see trees, vines' tendrils, and fallen brush but little else. The putrid stench boiled within his nostrils no matter how hard he tried not to smell.

Ross gathered himself and began to half-walk, half-hobble up toward the direction of Pine Hollow Road. A hand shot out of the nearest pine tree's roots and grabbed Ross's ankle. He kicked and screamed, but the smell of decay choked him – he became exhausted all too quickly – and the hand got a good grip on his leg and pulled him down into a pit of soil and leaves at the base of the pine. Ross felt a sense of falling and dirt that tasted like death, and bright cascading ambulance lights, and then he knew no more.

* * *

When Ross came to a searing burning blinded his eyes. From the light the stench came even stronger at him, carving at the insides of his lungs. It can't be natural; the smell's death but it's chemicals too, thought Ross.

"Pain," he said. But his words were choking rasps that fell short of being audible. Oxygen crept to the forefront of his mind. I can't breathe. I need to breathe. I'll die. Help me, my love.

Ross tried to sit up and found himself unable to do so. He was tied down to a stretcher. Anxiety set in and put his chest into motion, heaving, though the air that he pulled in was befouled and dead, restricted.

The drum of rain filled Ross's ears, and then shuffling. There was someone there. Despite the excruciating pain, Ross opened his eyes and waited for his vision to return through the blinding white light.

The old hospital lamp nearly sat atop his head. But it had moss and worms crawling across its bell and

some oozed and melted with the heat of the light bulb. To Ross's left a black surgeon's mask covered a pasty face with two frozen-blue eyes staring intently.

"Help me," said Ross.

The call did not go unheeded. The surgeon bent down and tightened the strap about Ross's chest so that he could not even squirm on the stretcher where he lay awaiting his fate. While the surgeon came closer, the putrid stench became stronger until it was unbearable, and Ross passed out.

* * *

God, I hope you're all right, my love, thought Ross; you escaped the hospital. The rain sounded peaceful, with his eyes closed, and a hope stirred within Ross's heart. He slept.

A bone-jarring scraping woke Ross sharply. His eyes opened to slits and peered forward. The surgeon was cutting through a stainless steel operating table with a small circular saw; sparks leapt up about the black surgical mask and found a pair of black goggles protecting his eyes. Oh god.

Ross looked down and saw a crudely taped IV hanging from his wrist. It was then that it dawned on him that he felt numb all over. The pain he had had breathing, the bruised side where he was hit by the car, were numb.

Just beyond the surgeon, a grimy, crimson splattered sheet concealed some kind of hospital room. Ross was sure that was what it was; somehow he had been pulled into a hole in the woods and wound up in a dank, filthy hospital ward. The sound of metal cutting metal chewed at his eardrums.

As the smoking whizz wheel glowed red, the surgeon raised it in front of Ross's eyes and then slowly up. The smoking disc rose just over his brow and began to cut.

A horrendous and agonizing whistle filled Ross's very soul. He was numb, but felt his skull give way to the

swift, trembling saw. Slowly Ross felt his head shake with the strong hand holding his temple as the applied saw blade that penetrated his cranium in a long, slow circle.

"Help me, love."

Tears fell. The room began to shimmer. Ross winced with every turn that the iron grip of the surgeon's hand made to his head. Light kept dancing and leaping before Ross's eyes.

"Help me."

The moving and the ringing and the piercing stopped. The surgeon tossed the saw down to the surgical table haphazardly. He turned around and prepared something out of sight. Ross was too numb, too drugged, and too tired to realize what the ringing meant, what the saw really meant.

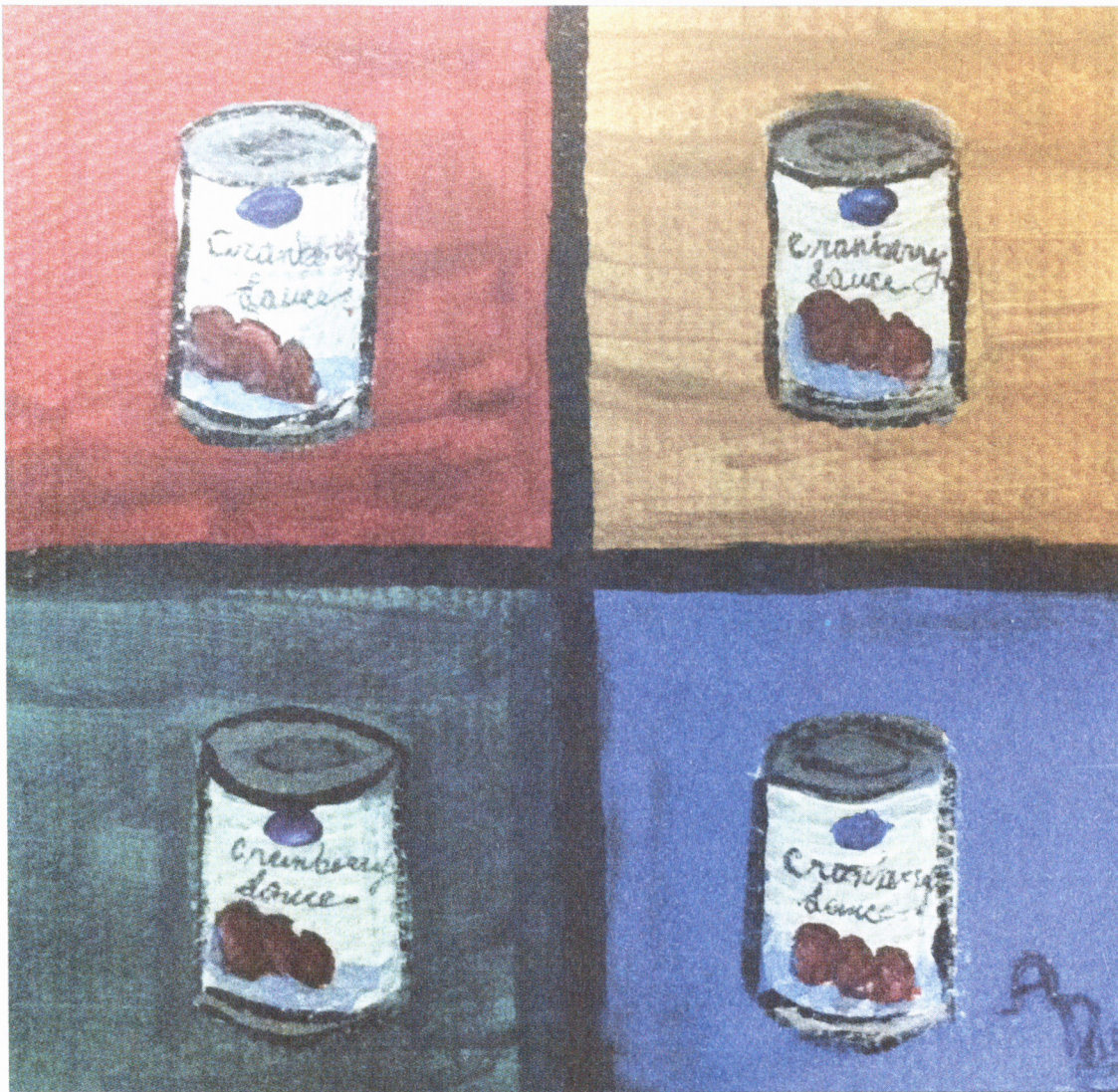
The black surgical mask and the bulbous rubbery goggles returned to Ross's view. The surgeon held up a heavy strap and suddenly Ross could no longer move his head. Then it was a huge pair of forceps.

Ross's tongue clove to his mouth. Sweat filled his eyelids. And then the loudest thing Ross ever heard went *pluck*. The top of the head and skull went flying up into the air and fell to the glistening hospital floor.

That's my head, thought Ross. Oh god; oh god; oh god.

The surgeon removed his goggles, and his eyes gleamed unnaturally orange in the light of the old lamp. A pale hand, full of warts and open pustules, reached out and grasped Ross's brain within its fingers.

Lightning struck the artist's vision and all creativity was drained into the palm of this other, this hollow thief. For all intents and purposes Ross was dead right then. Even as he breathed on, blind and choking, the Camaro was found on the side of the road by his fiancé. But Ross was too far gone and drifted further and further away from the pit of Pine Hollow Road.



Painting by Arielle Dollinger



Photo by Elizabeth Grey

Tuesday Morning

by Liz Kaempf

My brain shuts down as the water is turned on.
 There's no sorting through the hurricane in my mind,
 but the least I can do for my tired body is to polish it brand new.
 The steam rises and breaks through the choking.
 I have to remind myself I'm not as desensitized as I feel
 That the numbness after the tears isn't permanent
 Each word drifting from the radio through the curtain feels like a personal knife in my gut
 Eventually the time passes and I remember why I'm even standing:
 Hair, Face, Skin, Legs, Feet, Skin
 Skin?
 No, not skin. Skin is done.
 Face. Again, face.
 The pain in my stomach makes itself known and I can't recall the last time I've eaten.
 Human needs.
 Basic. Simple. Arbitrary.
 Something meager, like tea and bread.
 This feels like a cage. Locked away.
 Cry. Gasp. Cry. Breathe.
 Eat. Cry. Sleep. Gasp.
 Another shower because I can't feel my own skin.

And this is your effect.
 Your inaction sweeps over my body,
 seeps into my blood,
 delves into my bones.
 I can only feel my hunger.
 I've been starving for months.
 I'm not insatiable,
 just not properly nourished.

The Lady Doth Murder Sleep

by Liz Kaempf

These days don't feel like they used to.
 It's no longer poetry in the grass and rolling in the sun.
 It's not late night walks and talks about what could have been,
 Should have been.
 It's not as simple, and it's never right.
 It's not honest, and it's far from true.
 We soaked our feet in lies underneath
 and claimed we knew what we were doing.
 It's always a pity to end up this way, but I've grown accustomed
 and it's nothing more than commonplace now.
 I must be clairvoyant with the way I saw this coming,
 and when you first saw me,
 you should have started running.
 Too late now, what's done cannot be undone.
 But I swear, I wished I'd known.
 I would have turned a blind eye,
 and drove myself back home.



Photos by Elizabeth Grey

The 'Thing' That Killed Clawson

by Andrew Carrieri

Author's Note: I hereby dedicate this story to all who have had to read my "chicken scratch" over the years. This piece is part mystery and part societal parody; numerous historical and contemporary parodies are included. Enjoy!

Contemporary Harmony—it's a quiet little town in the middle of nowhere. The inhabitants are peaceful, and the government, cable company, and electric company are truly invested in helping the people they serve. The town is also home to both the best university and the best hospital known to mankind. Ah yes, Contemporary Harmony is the perfect community...or so it seemed.

You see, last week an envoy named Clawson came from the distant kingdom of Renaissanceland for a visit. He was hoping both to observe Contemporary Harmony and to figure out the factors that allowed it to thrive; he wanted to use these strong points to improve Renaissanceland. Unfortunately, our envoy didn't come out alive. Clawson was killed by an awful "thing."

Now, you may be asking something like: "An awful thing? How can this be? Contemporary Harmony is the ideal community, one which would have made Robert Owen happy. What could have gone wrong?" Well, these were the same questions the investigators asked themselves in trying to solve the mystery. They were perplexed for a while. However, after retracing Clawson's steps, they pinpointed the "thing" that killed the envoy.

As I mentioned, the investigators retraced Clawson's steps to solve the mystery; we shall do the same. For fun, I urge you to play along. Pretend to be Sherlock Holmes, Encyclopedia Brown, or any other detective that suits your fancy. Ready? OK then! Away we go!

Clawson's first stop in Contemporary Harmony was the top hospital in the world, Rush Municipal Infirmary. Our envoy

was impressed with both the kindness and the compassion displayed by the doctors towards their patients. The doctors listened to the patients, and they reassured them.

Clawson first viewed the hospital's emergency room. He then observed several operations before concluding his visit by sitting in on several general outpatient diagnoses. During the diagnoses, the doctors allowed the envoy to read the prescriptions, which they wrote by hand. Overall, Clawson was impressed with the hospital and its staff.

Despite his satisfaction with the hospital's operations, Clawson began to feel nauseous just before he left the premises. He figured that he had contracted something from one of the patients and hoped it was nothing serious.

The next day, Clawson was scheduled to observe the headquarters of Contemporary Harmony's cable company, Optimum Efficiency, which provided television, internet, and phone service to the town at extremely low rates. In the rare instance when service was disrupted, management efficiently communicated the problem to the people and effectively directed workers to solve the problem in a timely manner.

In any event, Clawson recovered overnight (a good thing because he was second guessing his decision not to return to the hospital for examination) and was able to take the tour. He was both stunned and impressed with how everything in the facility was computerized. The computers were of the latest models, and an on-site generator ensured that power was never lost. As he was with the hospital, Clawson was extremely content with Optimum Efficiency.

Our envoy was equally impressed after he toured the operating center of the power company, Lilpac, the following day. Like Optimum Efficiency, Lilpac effectively used the latest technology—information and documents were all

easily accessible via computer. Clawson enjoyed about forty minutes reading various computerized documents.

Clawson was on top of the world. He had never felt happier in his life, and he had essentially figured out how he would improve Renaissanceland. He planned to visit the renowned Medbrook University and head home.

The envoy was blown away by Medbrook's campus. It was big, beautiful, and possessed top notch cuisine. More so than even the campus, however, Clawson loved the professors he talked with. In particular, he admired one of the philosophy professors, Dean Marty Higgins. Higgins had heard of Clawson's mission and invited him to his office for a chat.

After Higgins asked two of his graduate students, Kurt and Russell, to get coffee for him and Clawson, the two men conversed for a while. Higgins was impressed with the envoy and his mission. He told Clawson that he wished his students would take such great initiative; many of them were smart but extremely lazy. They performed well on exams but did little outside of the classroom. To prove that his students were smart, Higgins asked Clawson to read some graded exams.

The envoy struggled through the handwritten exams but agreed that they were good. Higgins then said of his students: "If only they could apply their intelligence to the real world. They're just very lazy." Again, Clawson concurred with the professor.

At this point, Clawson felt extremely nauseous. It

was a feeling similar to that which he had experienced at the hospital three days prior. However, this time Clawson would not walk away. The room began to spin, and he collapsed. Terrified, Higgins called for an ambulance, which rushed the envoy to the infirmary.

Despite the doctors' best efforts, they could not save Clawson, and he was pronounced dead just before dusk. Nobody at the hospital could figure it out. What had killed Clawson?

As I mentioned previously, the investigators retraced Clawson's steps in an attempt to put the pieces together. Eventually, they had that "aha!" moment: they concluded that the torture of reading bad handwriting had killed the envoy. You see, he only became ill after reading the prescriptions at the hospital and the exams at the university, all handwritten. Conversely, Clawson had suffered no ill effects after visiting the fully computerized headquarters of Optimum Efficiency and Lilpac.

This incident proved that while it was a great town, Contemporary Harmony wasn't perfect. In response to Clawson's death, the government is currently working to computerize all documents, prescriptions and exams included. It is the hope of all in the village that this digitalization movement will serve both to make life easier and to prevent future loss of life. It's a good move because, as unfortunately demonstrated by Clawson, bad handwriting can be deceptively torturous.

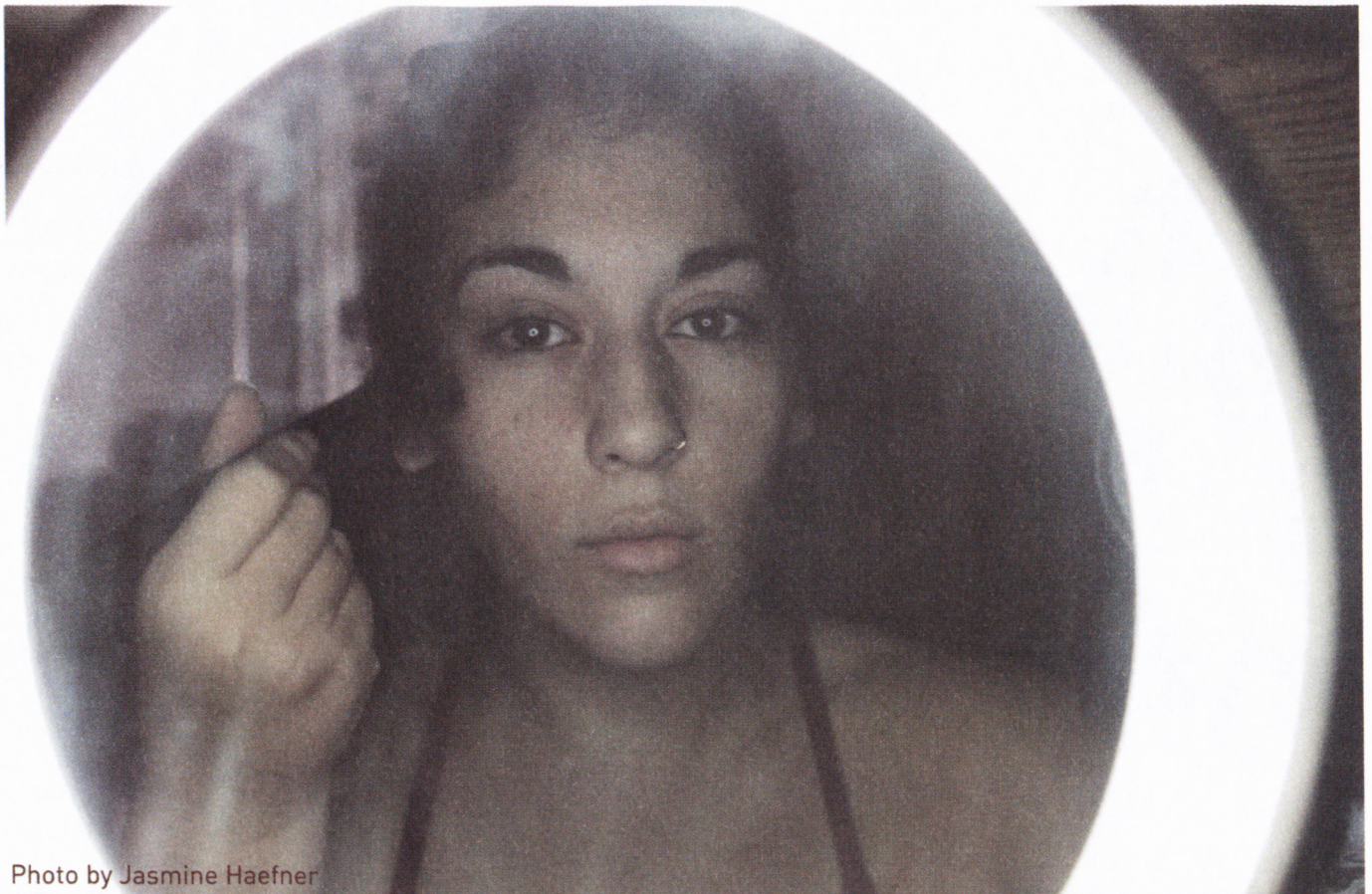


Photo by Jasmine Haefner

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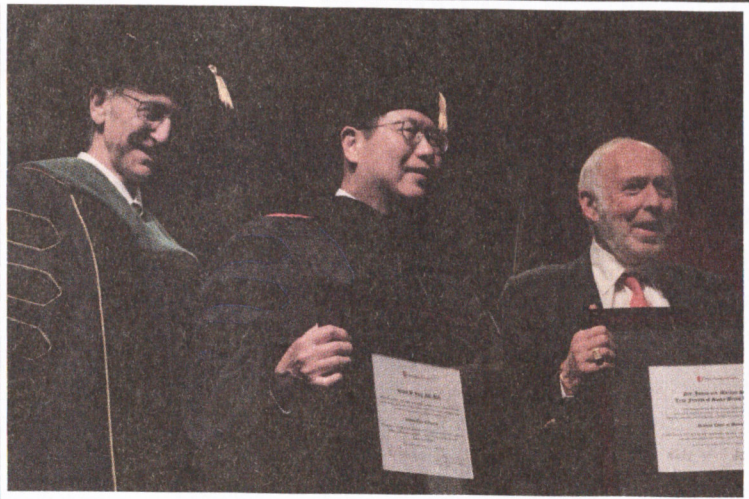
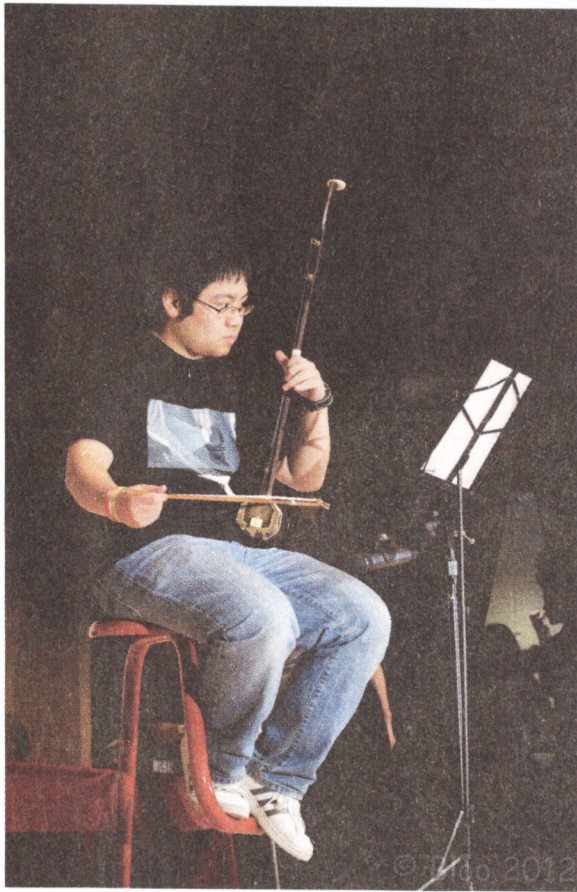
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the mayans were right